

The *migrant Self*: construction and negotiation of identities in the linguistic practices of new Italian migrants in Western Australia

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Abstract

This thesis analyses performances of interactional identity in the linguistic practices of recent Italian migrants to Western Australia. During the last decade and, in particular, after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, we have been witnessing a considerable increase in the number of young Italians moving overseas, and particularly to Australia; this phenomenon is often referred to by academic and non-academic studies as ‘new’ Italian migration, as a way to mark the difference with previous waves of Italian migrants. Contemporary Italian migration to Australia is still basically unexplored in the academic literature and my study represents the first of its kind specifically targeting this phenomenon.

The theoretical background of this investigation is informed by a social constructionist approach to social interaction and to the construction and negotiation of identities; according to this paradigm, identity is not a solid, given-by-nature core of the individual, but it is a product of social interaction and, as such, it is shifting, multi-faceted, and locally originated. My analysis benefited from insights of various disciplines, such as Conversation Analysis, Membership Categorisation Analysis, Interactional Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis.

The analysis is based on about twenty hours of video recordings of dinner parties among new Italian migrants and their partners. In collecting and analysing data, I followed an ethnographic approach based on participant observation and on ethnography’s stance against preconceived and apriori ideas.

I was able to group identity performances into three main categorisations made relevant by participants during interactions. These categorisations were expressed by participants as oppositions: the opposition between Italian and Australian ethnic identities, between ‘new migrants’ and ‘old migrants’ and between participants’ different Italian regional and sub-regional identities. Participants seemed to feel particularly strongly about the last two oppositions: on the one hand, they showed a strong awareness of the gap between them and post-war Italian migrants, often positioning themselves in opposition to this social group; on the other hand they also showed a strong sense of *campanilismo* re-enacting, as migrants, typically Italian dynamics of opposition between different regions or towns.

In supporting the notion of identity as ‘fluid’ and locally negotiated and, in particular, the importance of categorisation and narratives in carrying out identity work, my thesis also confirms the value of the ethnographic and conversation analytic methodology for the study of identity performances in interaction. My study also highlights the importance of further research on contemporary Italian migration to Australia.

Candidate's declaration

This thesis does not contain work that I have published, nor work under review for publication.

Candidate's Signature

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Introduction

The aim of the present research is to investigate the construction and negotiation of interactional identities in the linguistic practices of Italians who recently migrated to Australia. In applying an interactional approach based on the theoretical paradigm of social constructionism, I set out to explore which identity categories 'new' migrants make relevant in interaction and the means through which these categories are established and negotiated.

I base my analysis on the notion of interactional identity, introduced in the social sciences around the 1980s and 1990s, and now one of the most recognised approaches to the study of identity. Its theoretical assumption is that identity is not a given-by-nature attribute of the Self, but is constructed, performed and negotiated through social interaction. Therefore, rather than being a solid and unchangeable core of the individual, identities are multiple, ever shifting and context bound.

In this study I apply this approach to the setting of contemporary Italian migration to Australia. During the last decade or so and, in particular, after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, the number of young Italians moving to Australia has been constantly increasing; this phenomenon is often referred to both by academic (Baldassar and Pyke 2014) and non-academic studies (Moritsch 2012; Della Bernardina et al. 2013) as 'new' Italian migration, as a way to mark the difference with previous waves of Italian migrants. In this thesis I use this expression to refer specifically to those individuals who migrated to Australia after 2000, to choose a symbolic milestone, and in particular after 2008 and the Global Financial Crisis. This phenomenon is progressively acquiring significance both from a qualitative and a quantitative point of view, and my research aims at filling a gap in the academic literature. Whereas previous waves of Italian migration to Australia have been extensively studied (see Chapter II), contemporary flows are still basically unexplored. The present research, therefore, is among the first academic works that specifically tackles the phenomenon of new Italian migration to Australia and offers some insights into the differences from and similarities to previous cohorts of migrants. In introducing the field of research, therefore, I also present a detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis of contemporary Italian migration to Australia, based mainly on available statistical data.

My analysis is based on about twenty hours of video recorded conversations during dinner parties among 'new' migrants and their partners. The choice of this typology of data was dictated by the methodological paradigms I adopted, that is, Ethnography and Conversation Analysis, as both these approaches emphasise the importance of basing analysis on naturally occurring data, rather than on questionnaires or structured interviews. Another fundamental methodological principle I embraced during data analysis is Ethnography's stance against

preconceived ideas: I proposed to look at the data with the eyes of the social actors or, in other words, I aimed to understand what was 'going on' during the conversation, what identity categories were made relevant by participants, what positioning they were taking up, how they interpreted each other's conversational 'moves' and how they responded accordingly.

For this reason, the research questions I intended to answer are intentionally sketched: what categories are made relevant by interactants to construct their identities? What conversational resources are deployed by interactants to construct these identities? How are identities negotiated through talk?

The thesis is articulated in two parts, each one consisting of three chapters. In the first three chapters I discuss the field of research of my study, its theoretical background and the methodological principles on which I based data collection and analysis. I also provide a literature review of the main bibliographic sources on the topics discussed.

Chapter I aims to provide a clear and comprehensive account of the notion of interactional identity; in order to do so, it seemed appropriate to present a discussion of the developments that took place in the social sciences in the last half century or so, starting with the inspirational insights of Erving Goffman. I then establish a connection between Goffman and disciplines such as Ethnomethodology, Conversation Analysis, Membership Categorisation Analysis, and Interactional Sociolinguistics. As I argue in the chapter, my research benefited from the inputs of all these disciplines, and it is therefore hard to ascribe it to one or the other of them.

In *Chapter II* I introduce the topic of Italian migration to Australia by analysing the literature on the presence of Italian migrants, their language(s) and their ethnic identity in the Australian context. I draw attention especially towards a contrastive quantitative and qualitative analysis of past and contemporary migration flows, considering in particular the differences between post-war mass migration and the phenomenon of 'new' migrants.

In *Chapter III* I discuss the methodological principles adopted for data collection and analysis, foregrounding Ethnography and Conversation Analysis as the approaches I found particularly suited to my study. I discuss in particular the recruitment of participants, my role as participant observer, the choice of video recording, and the process of transcription and analysis of data.

Data analysis is presented in the second part of the thesis and its three-fold structure reflects the three main dichotomies between identity categories made relevant by participants during the interactions: following a 'general-to-more-specific' logic, I present data analysis starting from the opposition between Italian and Australian ethnic identities, then I move on to the one between 'new migrants' and 'old migrants', and, finally, I tackle the performances of Italian regional and sub-regional identities.

Each of the three analytical chapters is subdivided into two main sections: sections 4.1, 5.1, and 6.1 tackle an aspect of the topic discussed which emerged from the analysis as particularly significant and therefore deserves specific attention. These sections are informed by a more discourse-analytic approach, as they investigate more general conversational dynamics and analyse broader social identities, whereas sections 4.2, 5.2, and 6.2 represent a conversation-analytic discussion *stricto sensu*. Moreover, while in the former sections identities are often 'talked about' by participants, in the latter they are 'acted out' and negotiated through interaction.

In sections 4.2, 5.2 and 6.2 my analysis strongly benefits from the insights of Conversation Analysis and Membership Categorisation Analysis, as participants' deployment of categories and the oppositions they establish between them play a crucial role in the identity work they carry out. In these sections I also discuss interactants' use of conversational strategies such as footing and positioning, as well as linguistic and para-linguistic features in carrying out identity work.

Finally, I present some concluding remarks and point out the areas most in need of further academic research.

PART I

Theoretical and methodological background

In the first part of the thesis I establish the field of research to which this study belongs, I set the theoretical and methodological background on which I base the data analysis and I comment on the main bibliographical sources on the topics discussed.

In *Chapter I*, in particular, I analyse the developments that took place in the social sciences during the last century and that set the scene for the emergence of the notion of interactional identity. I focus in particular on the insights of Erving Goffman and on the disciplines of Ethnomethodology, Conversation Analysis, Membership Categorisation Analysis, Interactional Sociolinguistics and Sociocultural Linguistics, foregrounding the main contributions of each discipline to my research. I then give a definition of interactional identity and discuss the means through which it is performed in interaction.

In *Chapter II* I present a contrastive quantitative and qualitative analysis of past and contemporary migration flows, highlighting in particular the differences between post-war mass migration and the phenomenon of 'new' migrants. I also provide a literature review of the main studies that tackled the language of Italian migrants in Australia and finally analyse three approaches to the study of migrants' identity, namely the theory of Core Values and the Transnational and Interactional approaches.

In *Chapter III* I foreground Ethnography and Conversation Analysis as the methodologies that inform my research and I discuss the methodological principles adopted for data collection and analysis. I discuss in particular the recruitment of participants, my role as participant observer, the choice of video recording, and the process of transcription and analysis of data.

Chapter I

Language and social interaction: the notion of interactional identity

"Identity inheres in actions, not in people"

(Bucholtz and Hall 2004: 376)

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the theoretical principles on which I base the analysis of identity performance in interaction. I provide a definition of the notion of interactional identity, present an account of the emergence of this concept in the humanities and social sciences following the so-called 'constructionist turn' and discuss the 'practical' tools available to social actors to perform identities in interaction.

To promote a deeper understanding of the notion of interactional identity, however, I consider it essential to begin with an overview of the developments that took place in the humanities and social sciences from the 1950s onwards with regards to the realm of social interaction. Therefore, I start by summarising the theories proposed by Erving Goffman, as his insights into social interaction set the scene for an altogether new understanding of the relationship between individuals and society or, in his own words, between 'self' and 'others'; I then analyse Garfinkel's Ethnomethodology, inasmuch as it provides an innovative way of looking at data without *a priori* preconceptions and idealisations. Ethnomethodology was also the theoretical environment out of which Harvey Sacks' inspirational insights into the analysis of conversation developed. With Conversation Analysis the analytical focus shifted decisively towards the role that language plays in the unfolding of social reality and in the shaping of personal identity; conversation analysis also provided an effective vocabulary and methodological apparatus for the study of talk-in-interaction. I then comment on another branch of Ethnomethodology, that is, Membership Categorisation Analysis, with which the topic of identity comes into the spotlight; I conclude by discussing a more linguistic approach to the study of talk-in-interaction, that is, Gumperz's Interactional Sociolinguistics which also constitutes a versatile tool for the analysis of interactional identity.

Ascribing the present work to one of these disciplines is not an easy task: boundaries between them are subtle and often blurred. Many disciplines sit at the crossroads between sociology, anthropology and linguistics and, although they appear under a variety of rubrics, they share a significant part of their theoretical framework (Burr 1995: 1). First and foremost, they share a social constructionist view of reality: social constructionism, as I will discuss in section

1.2.2 below, developed in the second half of the twentieth century as a theoretical approach to the study of reality and knowledge and has then expanded to influence many disciplines in the social sciences, psychology and humanities. The scenario surrounding the realm of 'language and social interaction' still looks very fragmented and, as John Gumperz noted in his 1982 *Discourse Strategies* (4):

We are still far from a general theory of verbal communication which integrates what we know about grammar, culture and interactive conventions into a single overall framework of concepts and analytical procedures. Each of the traditions cited tends to concentrate on certain parts of the total signalling process, while tacitly relying on findings and concepts reflecting other disciplinary perspectives when dealing with different facets of communicative signs.

After discussing social constructionism and providing a definition of interactional identity, in the last part of the chapter I analyse in more depth the tools available to interactants for the construction and negotiation of identity in discourse.

1.1 Understanding social interaction

In the second half of the last century the social sciences witnessed an unprecedented growth of the interest in understanding the fine details of everyday social interaction. The epicentre of this analytical focus can be located in the department of sociology at the University of California, Berkeley¹, but, although studies on social interaction began as a strictly Californian phenomenon, the insights they produced have since then reached a far wider audience.

I discuss here only those theories that I consider fundamental for the analysis carried out in my thesis: these include, as I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Goffman's notion of 'interaction order', Garfinkel's Ethnomethodology, Sacks' Conversation Analysis, Membership Categorisation Analysis and Gumperz's Interactional Sociolinguistics. I believe that following this path that starts from a more general investigation of social interaction, continues on to an analysis of how everyday life is carried out in an orderly and meaningful way and on to the critical and creative role that verbal communication has with regards to these dynamics will provide a clear, solid and complete background to the understanding of identity work carried out in interaction.

¹ Nearly all the scholars whose works I analyse in this section taught in the department at some stage in their careers: Goffman, Garfinkel, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson all held positions at the department of sociology at Berkeley or in other campuses of the University of California, whereas Gumperz started his career at Berkeley as a professor in the department of anthropology.

1.1.1 Goffman and the interaction order

*“Because his vision was fresh and original
and pointed to new territories, it is still alive”
(Schegloff 1988: 93)*

Chronologically speaking, the early works by Goffman (1959, 1961a and 1961b) preceded by almost a decade the theorisation of Social Constructionism (SC) by Berger and Luckmann (1966), and Goffman, wary as he was of labelling and systematising his works, would not, probably, have called himself a social constructionist². The ideas expressed in his essays, however, align very well with the principles of SC and, as Irwin argues, one could say that he is “most roundly positioned in the social constructionist camp” (2011: 103). His works, I would argue further, fundamentally contributed to the establishment of the ‘camp’ itself, inasmuch as they highlighted the pivotal role played by social interaction in the shaping of reality as we know it³.

The revolutionary character of Goffman’s contribution to the social sciences is singled out by Scheff, in his attempt to ‘unbind’ the ideas expressed by his mentor: he argues that Goffman’s work is “so incredibly insightful that it could become an impetus for a new social science” (2006: 15). Although, as I discuss later in this section, the potential of Goffman’s ideas probably did not fully unfold, his theories had a fundamental impact on contemporary social sciences and in the following sections I analyse those aspects that are of particular interest for my research.

The interaction order

Goffman’s major insight was to identify in the microcosm of interaction “a distinct moral and institutional order that can be treated like other moral institutions, such as the family, education, religion, etc.” (Heritage 2001: 48). Not only did he identify this reality, he also gave it a name, thus introducing into the social sciences what has thereafter been referred to as the ‘interaction order’ (Goffman 1983; Drew and Wootton 1988)⁴.

² Since Goffman is one of the most widely read and discussed sociologists, over the years his works have been slotted into several disciplines, social constructionism (Irwin 2011) and symbolic interactionism (Scheff 2006; Kendall 2011) among others. Formally, Goffman belongs to the so-called ‘Chicago School’ (or symbolic interactionism), as he studied at the University of Chicago in the ‘40s, but, as Kendall points out, Goffman himself rejected this label (2011: 113). Goffman’s wariness of taking clear theoretical stances is well described by Collins (1980: 206, cit. in Scheff 2006: 29): “Goffman seems hyper-reflexive; he himself manifests an extreme form of role-distance, separating himself from any clear, straightforward position, be it theoretical or popular. [...] he appears as the epitome of the 1950s intellectual; hip to the point of unwillingness to take any strong stance, even the stance of his own hipness”.

³ Interestingly enough, Vivien Burr (1995) does not include Goffman’s contribution into her analysis of the theoretical background that informs social constructionism.

⁴ As Scheff pointed out (2006: 16) one of Goffman’s major achievement is to have created a ‘vocabulary for the microworld’: in fact, many expressions used to refer to aspects of social interaction (impression management, face-work, frame, footing, etc.) were first introduced in the social sciences by Goffman.

In his first, seminal work, *The presentation of Self in Everyday life* (1959), Goffman described the dynamics behind face-to-face interaction through the dramaturgical metaphor. Reinterpreting the Shakespearean line “all the world’s a stage”, he introduced into social theory concepts such as *face* (the dramaturgical *mask*), *role*, *part*, *performance* and *audience*, thus reflecting, in the vocabulary as well as in the meaning, the similarity between everyday life and life on a theatrical stage.

In the same work Goffman introduced another metaphor to interpret face-to-face interaction: the communication process is like an “information game” (1959: 8). A fundamental characteristic of social interaction is the ‘expressiveness’ of the individual: while trying to make sense of an encounter⁵, interactants continuously interpret and reinterpret impressions given by their counterpart in order to assess the information received. Goffman draws a distinction between impressions “given” and impressions “given off” by individuals (1959: 7), the latter being supposedly spontaneous and unintentional, like some gestures and facial expressions. During face-to-face interaction, the *others*, as opposed to the *self*, use impressions ‘given off’ to check up on those that the individual gives, but the latter, in turn, can manipulate the impressions given off so that they are actually coherent with what he/she is saying or doing. This complex symmetry in the communication process thus “sets the stage for a kind of information game – a potentially infinite cycle of concealment, discovery, false revelation and rediscovery” (1959: 8).

Finally, a fundamental component of social interaction is that of *emotions*. In fact, as Scheff (2006) argued, one of Goffman’s major contributions was to introduce in the social sciences, traditionally dominated by the thought-action dichotomy, a third dimension, emotions. The way Goffman treated emotions, however, is a matter of discussion among critics (Scheff 2006; Heath 1988) as he only addressed negative emotions, in particular embarrassment and, less extensively, shame (1959; 1969). This almost exclusive interest in embarrassment and shame could be explained by the following quote from *The Presentation of Self in everyday life* (1956: 266):

To conduct one’s self comfortably in interaction and to be flustered⁶ are directly opposed. The more of one, the less, on the whole, of the other. [...] Face to face interaction in any culture seems to require just those capacities that flustering seems guaranteed to destroy. Therefore, events which lead to embarrassment and the methods for avoiding and dispelling it may provide a cross-cultural framework of sociological analysis.

It is obvious, therefore, that embarrassment plays a critical role in the management of social interaction: should it occur, a communication breakdown would be likely to follow, caused by the temporary inhibition of all those skills individuals need in order for social interaction to be

⁵ For a definition of the term ‘encounter’ within Goffman’s theory see Goffman 1961b.

⁶ Goffman uses the terms ‘embarrassment’ and ‘flustering’ interchangeably.

successful. Goffman's insight into the role of embarrassment in everyday life, I would argue, is echoed in Garfinkel's idea of 'breaching experiments'⁷ (Garfinkel 1967), that is, "basic departures from taken-for-granted social expectations" (Heritage 2001: 50) that cause fluster and confusion in interactants and hinder their capacity to make sense of what they see or hear.

The deconstruction of the Self

Another key concept in Goffman's theory is what Scheff defines as the "deconstruction of the Self" (2006: 19): challenging the idea of the self-contained individual proposed by perspectives such as psychiatry and medicine, Goffman viewed the self as a "dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented" (Goffman 1959: 253), rather than being a "property of the persons to whom it is attributed" (1961a: 168). And again, in the same passage from *Asylums* (1961a) he concluded that the self dwells in "the pattern of social control that is exerted in connection with the person by himself and those around him".

This anti-essentialist vision of the self as a reflection of social life⁸ has been drawn on and expanded by social-constructionist scholars and represents one of the foundational assumptions of the notion of interactional identity on which I base my analysis.

Goffman's limitations

Although Goffman is still very much studied, discussed and appreciated by contemporary social scientists and although in this same chapter I discuss several approaches to the study of social interaction and discourse that drew amply on Goffman's insights, it may be reasonable to say that the revolutionary potential of his ideas never fully unfolded⁹ (Heritage 2001; Scheff 2006; Kendell 2011). In fact, as Kendell (2011: 113) points out, Goffman remains an enigma in contemporary sociology "as his work is not easily classified and does not reflect the wider perspectives or debates". If one compares this latter note by Kendell to Scheff's provocative question about Goffman being a "free floating intellectual" (2006: 29), one can start to see why his work has been only partly understood¹⁰. Other factors, such as the lack of systematicity¹¹, his

⁷ See section 4.2 below.

⁸ Goffman's notion of the self shares many characteristics with Cooley's "looking-glass self": according to Cooley, a symbolic interactionist, we "live in the minds of others, without knowing it" (Cooley 1922: cit. in Scheff 2006 p. 33). For further details on the relations between Goffman and symbolic interactionism see Scheff 2006 (pp. 33-49) and Kendall 2011.

⁹ See also Giddens 1988: "No one would question the claim that Goffman was one of the leading sociological writers of the post-war period. (...) But all this having been said, Goffman would not ordinarily been ranked among the major social theorists" (p.250). In the cited essay, instead, Giddens argued against this stance and proposed an understanding of Goffman as a "systematic social theorist".

¹⁰ Here is what Scheff has to say about Goffman's exegesis: "(...)I think that there is some justice to the charge that Goffman's position is muted or not clear, because he didn't adequately explain his intent. But another reason might have to do more with us readers than with Goffman: that his work is so much advanced that we haven't understood it" (2006: 29).

convoluted style¹², and his personal reputation as a ‘character’, I would argue, also contributed in preventing Goffman’s ideas from being fully understood. Nonetheless, I agree with Scheff in saying that these, rather than as limitations, could also be seen as symptoms of Goffman’s geniality (2006: XI) or, to put it in Giddens’ words, as signs of a brilliant “butterfly” mind (1988: 251).

1.1.2 Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology

In the vivid and fertile milieu of 1960s American social sciences, Goffman was not alone in investigating the features and dynamics of social interaction: in fact, Heritage (2001) goes as far as saying that “Goffman’s seminal insights might have been stillborn but for their intersection with a quite separate emergence of interest in meaning and cognition in the social sciences during the 1960s” (49). Heritage is referring here, above all, to Garfinkel’s insightful research that goes under the name of Ethnomethodology.

Garfinkel’s Ethnomethodology (EM) is particularly relevant to the present study because of its subsequent branching into disciplines, such as Conversation Analysis, Membership Categorisation Analysis and Interactional Sociolinguistics, which inform the methodological and theoretical framework of my research. In the following sections I therefore outline the major contributions that EM provided to the understanding of everyday social life.

Garfinkel’s notion of ethnomethods

Like Goffman, Garfinkel aimed at understanding social interaction by “paying to the most commonplace activities of daily life the attention usually accorded to extraordinary events” (Garfinkel 1967: 1). His specific focus, however, lay in answering the following questions: “how is it that we make sense of our circumstances? And how do we get to a shared understanding of the actions happening around us?”. In Garfinkel’s own words: “Ethnomethodological studies analyse everyday activities as members’ methods for making those same activities visibly-rational-and-reportable-for-all-practical-purposes, i.e. ‘accountable’” (1967: VII)¹³. In order for social life to unfold in an orderly, coordinated and meaningful way it is critical for people involved in an interaction (or ‘encounter’, in Goffman’s terminology) to be able to make shared sense of the situation and act upon the shared sense they make (Heritage 2001: 49). The

¹¹ Giddens (1988: 251) comments on this point that “Goffman’s writing lacks a certain cumulative quality. Virtually, all of his books are assemblages of essays, rather than integrated works. (...) Goffman’s writings, as it were, mirror that episodic continuity characteristic of the day-to-day forms of social life he seeks to describe and analyse”.

¹² Giddens seems to have a different idea about Goffman’s style: referring to his writing he used expressions such as “intrinsically accessible” (1988: 250) and “plain” (Ibid.) and argues that this is one of the reasons why Goffman has been so much appreciated by the lay public as well as by academic readers.

¹³ The notion of accountability is explained in details by Garfinkel in 1967: 1.

methods used by people (*ethnò* in ancient Greek), hence the names ‘ethnomethods’ and ‘ethnomethodology’, to accomplish this primordial yet crucial task are the object of Garfinkel’s study.

To seek confirmation of his ideas, Garfinkel used a series of so-called ‘breaching experiments’, that is, quasi-experimental procedures aimed at producing basic departures from taken-for-granted social expectations¹⁴ (Heritage 2001: 50). A simple yet effective example is a breaching experiment aimed at proving that people do take certain expressions or references for granted, such as the question “How is X feeling?” and therefore expect their interlocutors to understand them without need of further clarification¹⁵. In Garfinkel’s more technical words “the anticipation that persons will understand, the occasionality of expressions, the specific vagueness of references the retrospective-prospective sense of a present occurrence [...] are sanctioned properties of common discourse” (1967: 41). As Heritage noted (1984: 101), Garfinkel’s research proved that these social expectancies are treated by individuals as normative and morally sanctionable matters.

Garfinkel’s EM had a profound influence on many scholars, not only at the University of California, where he taught for more than forty years, but also in other universities that he visited during his career (Garot and Berard 2011: 127): at the University of California he met Emanuel Schegloff and Harvey Sacks, who would later initiate the branch of EM that goes under the name of Conversation Analysis; at Boston he met and collaborated with, among others, George Psathas and Michael Lynch, and his visits at the University of Manchester influenced the works of Sharrock, Atkinson and Heritage¹⁶.

To conclude, the affinities between Goffman and Garfinkel are not limited to their shared interest in the organisation of social interaction, but extend also to what I have mentioned above as some of Goffman’s limitation: Heritage, in fact, pointed out how, approaching Garfinkel’s work, the reader is confronted with some “formidable obstacles” (1984:

¹⁴ Garfinkel discussed these experiments at length in his essays (see in particular 1967: 35-75).

¹⁵ Here is the text reported in Garfinkel 1967: 42-43:

S: Hi, Ray. How is your girlfriend feeling?

E: What do you mean, “How is she feeling?” Do you mean physical or mental?

S: I mean how is she feeling? What’s the matter with you?

(He looked peeved)

E: Nothing, just explain a little clearer what do you mean?

S: Skip it. How are your Med School applications coming?

E: What do you mean “How are they?”

S: You know what I mean.

E: I really don’t.

S: What’s the matter with you? Are you sick?

¹⁶ Some of the scholars cited in this section are also authors of the major bibliographical sources for the study of Harold Garfinkel: Lynch and Sharrock 2003 represents the most complete and updated anthology of primary sources about ethnomethodology, while Heritage, often cited in these pages, is the author of an essential exegesis of Garfinkel’s ideas (1984; see also Heritage 2001 for a concise yet complete overview).

1). Firstly, the prose is not of the most accessible kind, rather, as Heritage put it, in Garfinkel's writing "dense thickets of words seem to resist the reader's best endeavours" and his insights remain somehow "open-ended and difficult to place" (ibid.) Secondly, Garfinkel also did not systematically state his theoretical assumptions, "programmatic statements crop up, but they are formidably abstract and remain largely detached from traditional sociological reference points" (ibid.). Garfinkel's writings, as well as Goffman's, seem to be the projection of profoundly insightful minds, whose revolutionary character is not limited to the content of their works but also pervades their style.

1.1.3 Sacks and Conversation Analysis

From the intersection of Goffman's and Garfinkel's perspectives arose the analytic approach known as Conversation Analysis (CA) (Heritage 1984; ten Have 2007). CA was initiated by Harvey Sacks in the early 1960s, although his premature and tragic death in 1975 prevented him from seeing many of his works published and from witnessing the development CA had in the following decades. A series of lessons given by Sacks at the University of California at Irvine between 1964 and 1972, and posthumously published by Emmanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson in 1992 remains today *the* reference work for CA researchers¹⁷.

Sacks, together with Schegloff, was one of Goffman's graduate students at Berkeley and he certainly derived from his mentor an interest in the organisation of social interaction and, most importantly, the insight that the 'interaction order' is a fundamental social domain worth to be studied in its own right (Heritage 2001). Between 1963 and 1964 he worked at the *Center for the Scientific Study of Suicide* (Los Angeles) and, during his time there, he came across a corpus of audio recordings of phone calls to the *Suicide Prevention Center* that was to become the major source of inspiration for his papers and lectures. Applying Garfinkel's insights into ethnomethods for practical reasoning and sense making he started to observe regularities and patterns in the organisation of phone conversations.

The core theoretical assumption of conversation analysis is the intuition of an orderliness that underlies conversational sequences and of the possibility to empirically analyse them. In the following sections I further discuss this perspective, comment on the methodological principles of CA and outline the main conversational structures described by CA.

¹⁷ Fundamental primary sources for the study of CA are also Schegloff 1968, Schegloff and Sacks 1973, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974 and, among other, Atkinson and Heritage 1984, Drew and Heritage 1992a and Lerner 2004. As for secondary sources, Heritage 1984, Goodwin and Heritage 1990, Psathas 1995, Silverman 1998 and Drew and Heritage 2006 offer a most complete introduction to CA. Ten Have 2007 and Rapley 2007 have a less theoretical and more practical approach and represent useful resources when analysing actual data.

Theoretical assumptions of CA

One way to look at CA is, as Goodwin and Heritage point out (1990: 285), to see in it an attempt at describing the interconnections between language, context, meaning and action. This field of research intersects many disciplinary boundaries, such as social theory, linguistics and speech act theory; in the mid 1960s, all these approaches looked at social interaction, and at conversation in particular, as disorderly and unstable phenomena, subject to too many variables to be methodically analysed. Chomskyan cognitivism, for instance, viewed actual talk as “such a degenerated sample of ideal linguistic competence that linguists should ignore it entirely and work instead with idealized sentences constructed by the analyst” (Goodwin and Heritage 1990: 285). The revolutionary insight proposed by ethnomethodology, instead, was that individuals, rather than act randomly and unpredictably, seem to apply specific sets of rules and normative behaviours when interacting in everyday life. Flowing from the ethnomethodological tradition, CA argued that the specific domain of conversation has its own organisational structures and that these, being orderly and methodically produced by interactants, can be the object of scientific analysis¹⁸. Furthermore, as the following quote from Schegloff and Sacks (1973: 290) makes clear, the orderliness of conversation is not only available to the analyst, rather, it is in the first place available to interactants themselves:

We have proceeded under the assumption (an assumption borne out by our research) that in so far as the materials we worked with exhibited orderliness, they did so not only for us, indeed not in the first place for us, but for the coparticipants who had produced them. If the materials (records of natural conversations) were orderly, they were so because they had been methodically produced by members of the society for one another [...]. Accordingly, our analysis has sought to explicate the ways in which the materials are produced by members in orderly ways that exhibit their orderliness, have their orderliness appreciated and used, and have that appreciation displayed and treated as the basis for subsequent action.

The above programmatic paragraph is worth the lengthy citation as it incorporates most of CA core theoretical principles: the orderliness of conversation, the ability of individuals to produce orderly conversational turns and to recognise other members' productions as orderly, and the sequential nature of conversation. The second of these assumptions echoes Garfinkel's “symmetry proposal” (Heritage 1984: 241), that is, the observation that “both the *production* of conduct and its *interpretation* are the accountable products of a common set of methods or procedures” (ibid.; emphasis in the original); in other words, member of a conversation apply their acquired knowledge and competences both in the role of speakers and in the role of hearers.

¹⁸ “The detailed ways in which actual, naturally occurring social activities occur are subjectable to formal description. Social activities [...] are methodical occurrences. [...]. The methods persons employ to produce their activities permit formal description of singular occurrences that are generalizable in intuitively non-apparent ways and are highly reproducibly usable” (Sacks 1984: 21).

To conclude, another basic theoretical principle of CA is that turns in conversation are inherently *context-oriented* (Heritage 1984: 242). More specifically, their relation with context is twofold: they are both *context-shaped* and *context-renewing*. They are *context-shaped* inasmuch as their contribution to the conversation cannot be correctly understood without reference to the context, and, in particular, to the immediately preceding turns; they are *context-renewing* because, following the same principle, they generate the context for subsequent utterances. Each turn has thus the potential for maintaining the ongoing context, adjusting it or generating a new one.

Turn-taking and sequencing

One of CA's most crucial insights into the organisation of conversational interaction is to have identified in turns, and more precisely in turns-within-sequences, the fundamental units for the analysis of conversations. In this section, therefore, I summarise the main features attributed by conversation analysts to two basic notions: the concept of *turn-taking* and the stress on the *sequential* nature of conversation.

As Sacks and Schegloff pointed out in their 1973 co-authored paper¹⁹, among the essential features of a conversation are the facts that, for the great majority of cases, one and only one person speaks at a time, changes of speaker occur regularly and these changes happen, ideally, with no gaps or overlapping. Although this may sound a rather straightforward idea, the accomplishment of this task by speakers and its analysis by the researcher may not be as simple. In fact, CA has developed a detailed description of the so-called 'turn-taking machinery', that is, the set of normative conventions that speakers use to regulate their turns sequentially in conversation.

Two basic concepts within the turn-taking machinery are those of 'transition relevant place' and 'turn constructional unit' (Sacks et al. 1974; see also ten Have 2007: 128). The latter may be defined as the part of a turn that determines the *action* that the turn aims to perform: as ten Have put it, in fact "what basically defines the 'units' of the turn-taking system, the TCUs [*turn constructional units*], is not some objectively describable set of structural, such as grammatical, prosodic, or whatever, properties, but its action potential for participants" (2007: 129). CA therefore attributes a performative character to talk-in-interaction: utterances are actions, and conversations are means to 'get things done'. As for 'transition relevant places', they occur at the end of each 'turn constructional unit' and offer the ground for a potential

¹⁹ While the 1973 paper sketchily introduces the concept of turn-taking, the paper published in the following year by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (Sacks et al. 1974) remains the main bibliographic reference on the topic.

following turn²⁰. The opportunity may be taken up by a speaker selected by the previous one, someone may self-select themselves as speaker or the person who produced the last turn may choose to speak again: these three options are hierarchically organised and have been presented here in a most-to-least-preferable order (ten Have 2007: 128).

Another core assumption of the CA approach is the *sequential* organisation of talk-in-interaction. As Heritage noted, CA is “particularly concerned with the ways in which utterances accomplish particular actions by virtue of their placement and participation within sequences of actions” (1984: 245). In the section above I pointed out how conversational turns are both context-shaped and context-renewing, and this notion acquires even further significance in the light of the observations about sequencing. The idea of sequence refers to the fact that “any utterance in interaction is considered to have been produced for the place in the progression of the talk where it occurs (...), while at the same time it creates a context for its own ‘next utterance’” (ten Have 2007: 130).

One property of conversational turns is their ‘sequential implicativeness’ (Schegloff and Sacks 1973: 296), that is, the fact that each turn projects onto the following one(s) a ‘relevant next activity’ to be accomplished by the next speaker (Heritage 1984: 245). The most basic form in which sequential implicativeness is displayed is in the so-called ‘adjacency pair’. An adjacency pair is a structure that, according to Sacks and Schegloff’s definition (1973: 295-296), presents five main properties. The following is Heritage’s very effective outline of the lengthier original description (1984: 246):

An adjacency pair is:

- 1) a sequence of two utterances, which are
- 2) adjacent,
- 3) produced by different speakers,
- 4) ordered as a first part and second part, and
- 5) typed, so that a first part requires a particular second part (or range of second parts)

Common examples of adjacency pairs are question-answer, invitation-acceptance/refusal, and exchange of greetings. The idea that, once a first part of an adjacency pair is produced, the second part is due, commonly referred to as the ‘conditional relevance’ of a second action upon a first (Heritage 1984: 249), may suggest an understanding of adjacency pairs as invariably implemented structures; this, however, is not the case, as the relatively frequent occurrence of non-answered questions or non-returned greetings can easily demonstrate. What is undoubtedly true about adjacency pairs, instead, is their normative character. This assumption finds a confirmation in the analysis of deviant cases themselves: when a greeting is not returned,

²⁰ “The first possible completion of a first such unit constitutes an initial transition-relevant place. Transfer of speakership is coordinated by reference to such transition-relevant places, which any unit-type instance will reach” (Sacks et al. 1974: 12).

the speaker who has produced the greeting is allowed to make inferences about the reasons why the hearer did not implement the 'paired action'. They may have not heard the greeting, they may have failed to recognise the speaker or they may have chosen not to return the greeting, an option which would then trigger further inferential work. In other words, the absence of the second part of an adjacency pair is an *accountable* phenomenon, while its presence is specifically *non accountable*.

The concept of adjacency pairs is linked to another conversational structure explored by CA studies, the production of *preferred/dispreferred responses* and, consequently, the display of *social solidarity*. Heritage noted (1984: 265) that there is a pervasive tendency among interactants to avoid conflicts and maintain social solidarity. This general principle is reflected in conversations in the way preferred and dispreferred responses are produced: preferred responses, that is, responses that foster social solidarity, such as the acceptance of an offer, are produced in a very straightforward fashion, with no delay or even with an overlap with preceding talk (Pomerantz 1984); dispreferred actions, instead, are usually delayed by means of a number of conversational 'fillers' (such as pauses, prefaces or insertions) and require to be accounted for by the speaker in order to avoid jeopardising social solidarity.

The focus on naturally occurring data

CA, as a sociological approach, grew out of Sacks' critique of the social scientific paradigm of the 1960s based on typed concepts and detached from 'natural' data (Sacks 1984; Heritage 1984: 234-235). Sacks, instead, proposed a methodological approach that considered naturally occurring events as the only acceptable source of data (1984: 25):

I want to argue that, however rich our imaginations are, if we use hypothetical or hypothetical-typical versions of the world we are constrained by reference to what an audience, an audience of professionals, can accept as reasonable. (...) Our business will be to proceed somewhat differently. We will be using observation as a basis for theorizing.

His search for naturally occurring events was successful thanks to the, then still recent, introduction of recording devices: recorded tapes not only enabled researchers to work with naturally occurring data, but also offered them the possibility to replay data as often as required, make them available for public scrutiny and use the same corpus for different projects. Moreover, the use of tape-recorded naturally occurring conversations, compared to an ethnography based on field notes or recollections of events, considerably lowers the risk of applying personal preconceptions to the analysis (Sacks 1984: 26).

The data on which CA's first seminal works are based are somewhat atypical, in that they come from very specific and partly institutionalised contexts, such as the *Suicide Prevention* helpline. In the following years, however, conversation analysts turned their attention to more

mundane conversations, and identified in this domain the ideal setting for the formal analysis of conversational procedures: it is in everyday, or ordinary, conversation that the purely local character of interactional dynamics is more evident and it is in this domain that individuals display the full array of conversational procedures. More recently, the branch of CA commonly referred to as 'Applied CA' (ten Have 2007: 173) has begun to look at institutional talk, for instance doctor-patient interactions, as a further field of interest for conversation analysts (Heritage and Clayman 2010).

1.1.3.1 Contrastive and Italian-based CA

As the works of Gumperz demonstrated (see section 1.1.5.1 below), the routines and rituals of conversation are culture- and language-specific. Until now, I discussed works focusing on the English language as this is the cultural and linguistic *milieu* where this kind of studies began. Given that my analysis is based on conversations carried out mainly by Italian speakers, however, it seems appropriate to comment on those works which, adopting a – broadly speaking – ethnomethodological approach, investigate conversational structures and dynamics with regards to the Italian language.

In Italy, the analysis of everyday talk became an established sociolinguistic tradition in the 1990s; most of the studies represent contrastive analyses of conversational structures, which compare Italian to other languages, especially English (Zorzi 1990; Galatolo and Pallotti 1999; Thüne and Leonardi 2003; Bowles and Pallotti 2004). One of the main findings of these works is that Italian differs from English not much in *what* is said, but in *where* it is said (Zorzi 1990: 111). In other words, Italian and English have different slots for the same conversational actions, such as requests or repairs; Zorzi, for example, mentions that laughter in dispreferred responses seems to recur more often before the response in English, and after the response in Italian (1990: 37).

As for more general trends, a common stereotype sees Italians as loud people who constantly overlap with each other, and this cultural cliché is partly confirmed by contrastive conversation analytic studies. Whereas the postulate of CA of one person speaking at a time appears to be a conversational universal, Italians do tend to be less tolerant of in- and inter-turn silence (Roberts et al. 2011) and more prone to interruptions and overlapping talk (Testa 1988; Stivers et al. 2009; see also a comparison between Italian and Dutch in Senten 2009).

Another feature that appears to be different in the two languages is the production of dispreferred responses: whereas I noted above that, in English, dispreferred responses are usually delayed through pauses, hesitations and other linguistic 'fillers', Italian speakers seem to treat dispreferred responses no differently from preferred responses, that is, the former are produced without hesitations or specific linguistic markers (Zorzi 1990: 22). Moreover, Italian

speakers tend to avoid the production of dispreferred responses by their interlocutors through the use of interruptions and self repair, whereas in English there is a stronger tendency to solicit a repair once the dispreferred response has been produced (Zorzi 1990: 104).

As for repairs (Zorzi 1990; Bazzanella 1999; Bazzanella and Damiano 1999; Galatolo 1999), it was also observed that English speakers tend to favour self-repairs, whereas other-initiated repairs are more frequent in Italian.

1.1.4 Membership Categorisation Analysis

As discussed in the section above, the main analytical focus of CA is the sequential nature of conversation. Sacks, however, also devoted much attention to another feature of conversational interaction, that is, the deployment of categories and categorisations in everyday talk (Sacks 1972b; 1992). The sequential and the categorical nature of conversation are, as Hester and Eglin point out, “so closely intertwined as to be separable only for the purposes of analysis” (1997: 3): categories are deployed by speakers to describe themselves and others in terms of readily available social identities and this task is accomplished sequentially, hence the inseparability of the sequential and the categorisational aspect of conversation.

From Sacks’ interest in the use of categories in conversation originated the so-called Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) movement. The term was first introduced by Hester and Eglin (1997) in their foundational work *Culture in Action*, but the approach had been previously theorised by Lena Jayyusi in *Categorization and the moral order* (1984)²¹. MCA looks specifically at the construction, ascription and negotiation of identity in conversation and represents therefore a particularly relevant set of principles for my research.

Both CA and MCA originated within the ethnomethodological framework, but, whereas CA has progressively diverged from it, MCA adopts a more conciliatory approach, trying to incorporate principles of practical reasoning from the ethnomethodological tradition with Sacks’ insights into the analysis of everyday talk (Garot and Berard 2011: 131; on the relations between CA and MCA see also Stokoe 2012a, Rapley 2012 and Silverman 2012)²². In keeping with the ethnomethodological tradition, MCA looks at categories as “indexical expressions, emphasizes the local, contextual specificity and use of categorizations, and sees categorial order as a local accomplishment of the use of categories-in-context” (Hester and Eglin 1997: 25).

²¹ My primary sources for the present overview of MCA are Sacks’ lessons on categorisation (1995), the works by Jayyusi (1984) and Hester and Eglin (1997), and Antaki and Widdicombe (1998a). A useful secondary source on MCA is Garot and Berard 2011 (131-138).

²² After several visits by Sacks and his students to the University of Manchester in England in the 1970s, a prestigious tradition of British MCA was born (Hester and Eglin 1997: 7). The ‘European branch’ of MCA tends to be more conciliatory towards EM and CA, as suggested by the name ‘ethnographic conversation analysis’ by which this discipline is often referred to (ibid.) Loughborough University, boasting the presence of, among others, Charles Antaki and Elizabeth Stokoe, currently represents one of the most lively centres for MCA studies.

Compared to its 'sibling' discipline, CA, in the past few decades MCA has been somewhat neglected by academic research; despite the fact that, as noted above, the sequential and the categorical aspects of conversation are closely linked to each other, in reality, the sequential analysis of talk has been preponderant over the study of speakers' deployment of membership categories and, as Stokoe put it, MCA risks to be "run off the road" (2012a: 278). To prevent this from happening, in the article cited, Stokoe proposes a systematic approach to the study of categories in conversation: she formulates five theoretical and methodological principles and ten key concepts, largely based on Sacks' observation, to guide the researcher in analysing membership categories in an orderly and empirical way (Stokoe 2012a: 280-281).

Membership categories and categorisation devices

As noted above, Sacks devoted much attention to the issue of categorisation in everyday talk during his lectures (1992) as well as in some of his first published papers (1972a, 1974). A category could be defined as a *culturally available classification or social type* that may be used to describe persons (see also Jayyusi 1984: 20; Hester and Eglin 1997: 3). In his 1974 paper Sacks stated that his attention "shall be exclusively limited to those categories in the language in terms of which *persons* [emphasis in the original] may be classified. For example, the categories: 'male', 'teacher', 'first base-man', 'professional', 'Negro', etc., are the sort I shall be dealing with" (15). Sacks went on to argue that certain groups of categories are perceived by members as 'belonging together' and called these groups 'collections of membership categories' or 'membership categorisation devices': examples of membership categorisation devices are notions such as 'family', which incorporates categories like 'mother', 'father', 'son' etc., or 'occupation' to which belong categories like 'teacher', 'doctor', 'lawyer', etc. (see Sacks 1992: 238 and also Jayyusi 1984: 212; Hester and Eglin 1997: 4). Further along in the same passage, Sacks specified that these collections are not constructed merely as aids to analysis, but rather "whether or not a particular category is a member of a particular collection is, in each and every case, a matter to be decided empirically".

The opening of Sacks' lecture number 6 in Fall 1964-Spring 1965 (1992: 40-48), is, I believe, a good example of how the idea of membership categorisation devices intertwines in his work with the analysis of conversational structures. In the passage below Sacks refers to membership categorisation devices as 'category sets' and elaborates on those devices, 'occupation' and 'nationality' in particular, that are commonly employed by speakers to interact with strangers or people they meet for the first time (40):

In dealing with first conversations I've very frequently found, as anyone can easily find, that especially in the early parts of these conversations certain questions are prominent; questions like 'what do you do?' 'where are you from?' etc. I wanted to see if there was some simple way I could describe the items that those questions contain, so as to provide for their occurrence by

rather abstract descriptions. [...]. It seems that there is a *class of category sets* [emphasis in the original]. [...] A first thing we can say about this class of category sets is that its sets are 'which'-type sets. [...] the names of the sets would be things like sex, age, race, religion, perhaps occupation. [...] I call them 'which'-type sets because questions about any of these can be formulated as, 'Which, for some set, are you?', and 'None' is not a presumptive member of any of the categories. And that would suggest what it is that provides for such questions occurring at the early part of first conversations: you don't have to know anything about somebody to be able to formulate a set of questions for which 'None' is not an expectable answer.

A particular type of categorisation device is what Sacks refers to as the 'standardised relational pair' (Hester and Eglin 1997: 4), that is, two categories that 'go together' because of personal bonds, such as 'mommy' and 'baby' or 'husband' and 'wife' or professional relations, as in the case of 'teacher-pupil' or 'doctor-patient'.

A membership categorisation device is thus a collection of categories plus a set of rules of application (Sacks 1974; 1992: 238); two rules are singled out by Sacks as critical to the application of membership categories: the *economy rule* and the *consistency rule*. The *economy rule* postulates that a single category is enough to describe a member: in the famous sentence "The baby cried. The mommy picked it up" (Sacks 1992: 236-266²³), for instance, the categories 'baby' and 'mommy' are enough to describe each character and make the recipient understand what the story is about. The *consistency rule* holds instead that "if a category from some device's collection has been used to categorize a first member of the population, then that category or other of the same collection may be used to categorize further members of the population" (Sacks 1972b: 333). Back to the example of "The baby cried...", the use of the category 'baby' makes other categories from the device 'family' relevant to the context of the story being told, hence the second part of the clause "...the mommy picked it up"²⁴.

One last, fundamental concept of the membership categorisation framework developed by Sacks and deployed by MCA is that of *category-bound activity* or *predicates* (Sacks 1972b: 335; see also Jayyusi 1984 for a further elaboration of the concept of 'predicate'): category-bound activities are "those activities that are expectably and properly done by persons who are the incumbents of particular categories" (Hester and Eglin 1997: 5). Categories and category-bound activities are co-selected, that is to say that the presence of an activity or predicate bound to a specific category allows the hearer or the observer to make inferences about the category the person performing the activity may belong to and vice versa. If we see a man arresting another man, we infer that the first man must be a policeman, because the activity of arresting is bound to the category 'policeman'. Going back one last time to the example of the crying baby, we can note that the category 'baby' may belong to two different devices: that of

²³ The sentence, as Sacks stated, is from a story in the book *Children tell stories*. Sacks analysed these words in several lectures, which eventually converged into his 1972 paper *On the analyzability of stories by children*.

²⁴ As a corollary to the consistency rule, Sacks introduced a set of hearer's and viewer's maxims; I refer to Hester and Eglin (1997: 5-6) for an overview of the subject.

'family' and that of 'stages of life'. The fact that the 'baby' is presented performing the activity of 'crying' suggests that the device made relevant by the category 'baby' is, in this case, that of 'stages of life'.

1.1.5 Multidisciplinary approaches to social interaction

The realm of language and social interaction, first empirically studied by the disciplines discussed above, has attracted the interest of so many different research lines that, in this highly fragmented panorama, the contributions of the single disciplines risk being overlooked.

Some scholars, however, have proposed a multidisciplinary approach to the study of language and social interaction that encompasses a rigorous empirical analysis of linguistic data and in-depth ethnographic fieldwork aimed at understanding social, cultural and historical contexts and dynamics. In this section I discuss two of these approaches, Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) and Sociocultural Linguistics (SL), as they seem to provide most useful insights for my own study.

As mentioned above, IS and SL share a strong focus on ethnographic research as an essential means to "flesh out" (Bucholtz and Hall 2008: 160) the empirical analysis of interaction. They also share the view that the interaction itself should not be the end point of the analysis; rather it should be the first step towards an understanding of broader sociocultural and historical issues. Therefore, while Sacks claimed that the only context relevant to the analysis of conversations is the one constantly created and re-created by the sequence of turns (Heritage 1984: 242) and that the sociocultural surrounding context should be left outside the analysis, the main interpretative interest of IS and SL lies precisely in the analysis of the reflections of broader social identities, such as gender, race or ethnicity, on the dynamics of interaction. As Schiffrin (1994: 236) pointed out, in this regard CA shows a more 'structuralist' view of interaction, whereas IS and, I would add, SL, have a more social and cultural emphasis (Gordon 2011: 73).

1.1.5.1 Interactional Sociolinguistics

Interactional Sociolinguistics is based on the works of John J. Gumperz (1982a; 1982b; Eerdmans, Prevignano and Thibault 2003; Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2008; Gordon 2011).

During his early fieldwork in the US, India and Norway, Gumperz realised that linguistic analysis would much benefit from the integration of survey data with methods of ethnographic research typical of other disciplines, such as anthropological linguistics. Having a background in Saussurian and Bloomfieldian structuralism, he did not deny the value of descriptive

sociolinguistics²⁵, but realised that, in the words of one of his students, structuralism “puts a circle”²⁶ around language, isolating it from the social and cultural context.

It is specifically in the cultural aspect of communication, instead, that Gumperz’ major interest lies, in particular in the dynamics of human interaction in multicultural and multiethnic settings: the variegated nature of modern industrial society, with the coming together of people from different cultures and ethnicities, offers the ideal setting for investigating what it is that makes intercultural communication possible or, on the other hand, what causes communication breakdowns (Gumperz 1982a: 4). According to IS, in fact, in order for human interaction to be successful, conversationalists must possess a specific cultural background knowledge of the norms that govern communication in a given community. As Gumperz noted at the opening of *Discourse strategies* (1982a: 1):

To participate in such verbal exchanges, that is, to create and sustain conversational involvement, we require knowledge and abilities that go considerably beyond the grammatical competence we need to decode short isolated messages. [...] Before even deciding to take part in an interaction, we need to be able to infer, if only in the most general terms, what the interaction is about and what is expected of us.

The second part of this quote introduces some of the assumptions that form the theoretical core of IS: individuals involved in conversation are constantly making inferences about what is going on in the interaction and, at the same time, ‘giving out’ cues to assist their counterparts in doing the same. Gumperz referred to the inferring process as *conversational inference*, and to the verbal and non verbal cues employed by speakers as *contextualisation cues* and on these principles he based his framework of interpretative analysis.

IS thus approaches the study of discourse and interaction from a linguistic standpoint, seeking in language use the strategies speakers adopt to ‘get things done’ in interaction; with respect to other linguistic traditions, what characterises IS is, in Gumperz’s own words, “the focus on the interactive and therefore social import of the fine details of verbal communication” (Prevignano and di Luzio 2003: 8).

As may already be apparent from these introductory remarks, Gumperz’s aim of understanding the dynamics of face-to-face interaction and in particular of how individuals make sense of what is going on in an encounter is closely linked to both Goffman’s pioneering works on the interaction order and Garfinkel’s interest in methods of practical reasoning. In fact, Gumperz himself positioned his works ‘in between’ Goffman and Garfinkel (Prevignano and di Luzio 2003: 8):

²⁵ Here is what he said about structuralism in his discussion with Prevignano and di Luzio: “I believe that the structuralists’ basic insights into linguistic, that is, phonological and syntactic competence, and their approach to speaking as a partially subconscious process, continues to be useful” (Prevignano and di Luzio 2003: 8).

²⁶ Agar, M. (1994) *Language Shock: understanding the Culture of conversation*. New York: Quill (cited in Gordon 2011: 71).

In my approach to interaction, I take a position somewhat between that of Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel. The former looked at encounters from an ethologist's perspective, while the latter was concerned with the interpretative processes that make interaction work.

Especially relevant to Gumperz's theory are Goffman's notions of 'frame' (1974) 'footing' (1981) and 'face' (1967). The concept of 'frame', in particular, intended as the definition of a situation, is often referred to in IS research: the speakers' ability to define the situation they are in, whether it is a casual chat, a joke-telling moment or a formal encounter, is critical for the positive outcome of the interaction and, as Gordon points out, contextualisation cues are "a means of collaboratively accomplishing framing in discourse" (2011: 73). Garfinkel's breaching experiments also attracted Gumperz's interest, although the major merit he ascribes to the ethnomethodological enterprise is to have highlighted the role of sociocultural background knowledge in everyday social interaction (ibid.).

Compared to the approaches proposed by Goffman and Garfinkel, Gumperz's theoretical framework is more centred on the role that language plays in everyday social life: according to Gumperz, it is through linguistic and paralinguistic signs that situations are constructed and negotiated, and indeed, as he notes in his 1982 influential book, "social identity and ethnicity are in large part established and maintained through language" (1982b: 7).

Contextualisation cues and conversational inference

As I have already mentioned above, the key theoretical contributions of IS are the notions of *contextualisation cues* and *conversational inference*. *Contextualisation cues* (Gumperz 1982a; 1982b; Levinson 2003) can be defined as the signalling mechanisms speakers use to signal and listeners use to interpret "what the activity is, how semantic content is to be understood and *how* each sentence relates to what precedes or follows" (Gumperz 1982a: 131; emphasis in the original). Such signalling mechanisms can be linguistic, paralinguistic, prosodic or formulaic expressions, as the following passage from *Discourse Strategies* makes clear (1982a: 131):

The code, dialect and style switching processes, some of the prosodic phenomena we have discussed as well as choice among lexical and syntactic options, formulaic expressions, conversational openings, closings and sequencing strategies can all have similar contextualizing functions. [...] Unlike words that can be discussed out of context, the meanings of contextualization cues are implicit. They are not usually talked about out of context.

The remarks on the impossibility of analysing contextualisation cues out of context point to their indexical nature: contextualisation cues are 'pure indexicals', as they have no propositional content, "they signal only relationally and cannot be assigned context-free lexical meaning" (Prevignano and di Luzio 2003: 9). The fact that contextualisation cues are inherently context-embedded and that they are rarely consciously noted and talked about, although habitually used

and perceived in conversation (Gumperz 1982a: 131), accounts for the choice to base analysis on naturally occurring data, rather than on abstract idealisations.

As for the notion of *conversational inference*, Gumperz defined it as “the situated or context-bound process of interpretation, by means of which participants in an exchange assess others’ intentions, and on which they base their responses” (1982a: 153)²⁷. This ability goes far beyond lexical and grammatical competence, which can be acquired through standard techniques of second language acquisition and requires from speakers a great deal of sociocultural background knowledge. Individuals belonging to the same sociocultural milieu tend to share the same expectations on ‘framing’, interactional conventions and use of linguistic and prosodic elements.

This process of constant signalling and interpreting usually goes unnoticed in everyday conversation and the positive outcome of an exchange is simply accepted as ‘natural’; negative outcomes, on the other hand, often lead to misunderstandings and possibly even cultural clashes. The microanalysis of talk in the light of the notions of contextualisation cues and conversational inference, instead, can prove that behind a communication breakdown between speakers from different cultures or ethnicity often lies a misalignment in the communicative practices of the parts involved in the encounter²⁸.

1.1.5.2 Sociocultural Linguistics

Sociocultural Linguistics (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, 2008) represents a multidisciplinary approach to the study of language as a social and cultural phenomenon; it brings together an array of research lines (like Critical Discourse Analysis, Discursive Psychology, Linguistic Anthropology and Interactional Sociolinguistics itself) which, Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 608) argued, despite taking sometimes different stances with regards to theoretical or methodological issues, should not be seen as competing but as complementary.

SL is particularly oriented towards the study of identity, since, as Bucholtz and Hall put it (2008: 161), “identity is an indispensable concept for making sense of language as a fundamentally sociocultural phenomenon”. In section 1.2.3 below I analyse in more detail the excellent framework for the analysis of interactional identities proposed by Bucholtz and Hall in their influential 2005 paper.

²⁷ An antecedent to the notion of conversational inference can be found in Dell Hymes’ concept of ‘communicative competence’, that is, the ability to know “when to speak, when not” and “what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner” (Hymes, D. ‘On communicative competence’, in J. B. Pride and J. Holmes (eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 269-93).

²⁸ See for example the famous case study of Indian and Pakistani women working in a cafeteria at Heathrow airport (Gumperz 1982a: 173-174), or that of the job interview of a South-Asian carried out by English native speakers, which prove that a good grammatical and lexical competence of the language without the knowledge of the conventions attached to the specific situation is not enough to assure a smooth and positive outcome (Jupp et al. 1982).

SL shares with other disciplines the view of identity as a product of social interaction and, more generally, the postmodernist view of social interaction as the realm where reality is constructed. Despite acknowledging the critical role of interaction, however, the analytic interest of SL does not stop at the interactional level: the ultimate object of analysis of SL studies is broader social, cultural and historic dynamics, encompassing issues of ethnicity, gender, agency and power. Bucholtz and Hall expressed this idea through an architectural metaphor: interactional moves are the building blocks of social life, but the ultimate goal of the analyst must always be the edifice that they construct (2008: 158).

In keeping with this view, SL considers CA and EM as offering a very useful set of tools for the analysis of interaction. However, Bucholtz and Hall also added that CA is made “more productive” (2005: 152) when combined with ethnography, as whereas the former provides the tools for the empirical analysis of data, the latter “allows the researcher to make sense of locally specific elements of the interaction, as well as to get at the sociocultural context in which interaction unfolds” (ibid.). This view, I would argue, although representing a valid analytic approach and one that has a significant relevance for my study, can be seen as partly in contrast with the original CA enterprise: as discussed above, the works by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson which originated CA postulate that interaction should be studied in its own right, and that conversations should be analysed without taking into consideration broader social and cultural contexts. According to SL, instead, ethnography is not only useful, but even necessary precisely to gain access to the sociocultural context of the interaction and to ensure that researchers are equipped with all the knowledge necessary in order to carry out an accurate and authentic analysis. This, I would argue, is becoming increasingly true as the world progresses towards globalisation and societies become more and more multilingual and multicultural.

1.2 Understanding interactional identity

In recent years, identity has been one of the most studied and discussed topics in the fields of humanities and social sciences, so much so that concluding their 2005 paper, Bucholtz and Hall assert that “the age of identity is upon us” (608). On the same line, Edwards (2009: 16) argues that identity is “the most commonly played game in town”; he then goes on to warn that so many works have been published about identity *lato sensu*, that “wheels are constantly being re-invented” and identity-related literature is becoming so large that its height risks exceeding its depth (14). The goal of this section, therefore, is not to engage in an epistemological discussion about the essence of identity, since, paraphrasing Edwards’ words, I do not intend to invent ‘my own wheel’. Nor does it aim to produce an exhaustive analysis of the wide spectrum of perspectives from which the topic of identity has been approached; rather, I wish to establish what it is that I mean when I refer to the notion of ‘identity’ *in the present work*. Before going

into the fine details of this argument, however, I briefly outline to what extent more traditional conceptions of identity differ from the one I adopt in this work and what theoretical developments allowed the idea of identity as a product of social interaction to enter and stably remain in the realm of contemporary social sciences.

1.2.1 Identity before and after the ‘constructionist turn’

I start this cursory overview of traditional conceptions of identity by looking at the word’s etymology as presented by the Oxford English Dictionary²⁹ :

“Middle French *identité* , *ydemité* , *ydemptité* , *ydentité* (French *identité*) quality or condition of being the same (a1310; 1756 in sense ‘individuality, personality’, 1801 in sense ‘distinct impression of a single person or thing presented to or perceived by others’) and its etymon post-classical Latin *identitat-* , *identitas* quality of being the same (4th cent.), condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else (8th cent. in a British source), fact of being the same (from 12th cent. in British sources), continual sameness, lack of variety, monotony (from 12th cent. in British sources; 14th cent. in a continental source) < classical Latin *idem* same (see *IDEM n.*) + *-tās* (see *-TY suffix¹*), after post-classical Latin *essentitas* ‘being’ (4th cent.); the Latin word was formed to provide a translation equivalent for ancient Greek *ταυτότης* identity. Compare Catalan *identitat* (14th cent.), Spanish *identidad* (a1455), Portuguese *identidade* (1696), Italian *identità* (1385), German *Identität* (1728).

Since the word stems from Latin *idem* ‘the same’, similarity, or sameness, seems to be the essence of traditional understandings of identity (Bucholtz and Hall 2004; Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 18; Edwards 2009: 19; Schwartz et al. 2011). The quote below may help to better understand what kind of sameness is involved here (Edwards 2009: 19):

[*identity*] signifies the ‘sameness’ of an individual ‘at all times or in all circumstances’ [...] the fact that a person is oneself and not someone else. It signifies a continuity, in other words, that constitutes an unbroken thread running through the long and varied tapestry of one’s life.

The etymological meaning is well represented in the everyday use of the word: one’s identity is what makes the individual recognisable and, in order to do so, it has to show some observable, fixed and recurring characteristics. According to this view, which informed the notion of identity from its first appearances in the English language in the mid sixteenth century until well into the twentieth century, identity is something that individuals possess, an inherent product given by nature that informs one’s personality. As argued by Benwell and Stokoe (2006: 17-47), this notion of identity as a ‘project of the self’ characterised the centuries from the Enlightenment through to Romanticism and Modernism and, even in contemporary society, it is “nostalgically retained in everyday life”.

Although the general trend in the study of identity was, until a few decades ago, similar to the one outlined above, we find, from the nineteenth century onwards, instances of different understandings of identity, some of which resonate in contemporary identity studies. The first of

²⁹ Retrieved on 22/12/2011 from <http://www.oed.com> s.v. identity.

these is the vision expressed by Hegel in *The phenomenology of spirit* of identity as an intersubjective, social matter (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 24). Coming to the twentieth century, we find some examples of 'alternative' accounts of identity in psychoanalysis, such as Lacan's vision of an alienated and de-centred subject (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 20-21).

It was only with what is commonly referred to as Social Constructionism, however, that the ideas of individual agency, social interaction and, ultimately, of human knowledge underwent radical changes, and so did the notion of identity. SC is usually traced back to the treatise by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann *The social construction of reality* (1966). The core theoretical issues that inform this perspective, however, were already present in earlier works by, among others, George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman. As I pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, SC, as an approach to reality, informs the theoretical background of a wide and diverse array of perspectives in various disciplines.

The theoretical principles of SC stem from the intellectual movement that goes under the name of 'postmodernism' (Burr 1995: 9; Lock and Strong 2010; Irwin 2011: 101): simply put³⁰, postmodernism challenged and questioned the theoretical assumptions that informed modernism, that is, the existence of an underlying structure of the world, the possibility for the individual to access it and therefore to reach the Truth. Postmodernist theories, instead, put forth the idea that there is no such thing as a "grand narrative" (Irwin 2011: 101), a "way of understanding the entire social world in terms of an all-embracing principle" (Burr 1995: 9) because there is no underlying, hidden structure to be uncovered and no ultimate truth to be grasped.

On a similar note, Berger and Luckmann theorised SC as a phenomenological approach to reality, as opposed to a positivist, or empiricist one. Phenomenology, as the word suggests, is a process that starts by observing phenomena in the world around us without any presupposition or general theorising. This, together with the fact that SC rejects the existence of a general truth and embraces a relativistic vision of the world, caused a shift in the focus towards the ordinary, the 'everyday' (Irwin 2011: 101). It is through the actions and the interactions of everyday life that, according to Berger and Luckmann, individuals construct their knowledge of the world. The individual is therefore attributed by social constructionist theorists a great deal of agency in the process of knowledge: it is the individual that subjectively interprets everyday life and tries to make sense of it as a coherent world (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 33). Knowledge can thus be defined in social constructionist terms, as the "objectivation of subjective processes (and meanings) by which the intersubjective common-sense world is constructed" (ibid.).

³⁰ In presenting this philosophical and historical overview of Social Constructionism, I share the caveat expressed by Irwin (2011: 101) that this is inevitably only 'potted history' and the dynamics that actually took place were more complex and entangled.

To conclude, SC can be defined as an anti-essentialist, critical and historically- and culturally-situated approach to the knowledge of the world. It is anti-essentialist because it does not believe in the existence of ‘essences’ that lie in things or people and that determine what they are or how they act (Burr 1995: 4). Rather, reality is constructed through social processes and is intersubjectively negotiated by individuals. It is a critical approach because it rejects taken-for-granted notions such as family, gender or race. As Irwin put it (2011: 100), SC “wants to look back, and above and beyond to the processes that have caused these things to become taken-for-granted knowledge”. Finally, according to SC, the knowledge that we can get of the world is time- and culture-bound (Burr 1995: 4): social sciences cannot aim at a once-and-for all description of the true nature of individuals and the world they live in, because there is no such thing as a *true* nature. Everything has to be observed and interpreted in the context where it is created, that is in the situated and ephemeral stage of *social interaction*.

1.2.2 The notion of interactional identity

As discussed in the section above, according to social constructionist paradigms, the realm of social interaction is where reality is constructed. Identity, after being considered for so long something *inherent* and belonging to the *private* sphere of the individual, is then brought into the *public* domain of everyday life. In the constructionist or post-structuralist framework, identity, or rather *identities*, are shifting, multiple, locally originated and context-related; they are constantly assessed and reassessed, performed and contested, projected and rejected by individuals through social interaction (Burr 1995; Bucholtz and Hall 2005; De Fina et al. 2006; Benwell and Stokoe 2006; Edwards 2009).

In this scenario, language stands out as one of the main means through which identity work is carried out: as we read in Le Page and Tabouret-Keller’s foundational work on the ‘language and identity’ nexus, “linguistic behaviour [is] a series of acts of identity in which people reveal both their personal identity and their search for social roles” (1985: 14). Starting from the 1980s, the humanities and social sciences witnessed an exponential growth in interest in identity-related issues and, in particular, in the link between language and identity. In 1982, Gumperz edited the volume *Language and Social Identity*; in 1985, as mentioned above, was published Le Page and Tabouret-Keller’s *Acts of Identity*; in 1990 was published Davies and Harré’s *Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves*, after which the concept of *positioning*³¹, together with Goffman’s *footing*, became one of the key concepts in the analysis of identity

³¹ The word ‘positioning’ has expanded its meaning from its technical use in Davies and Harré to general term broadly used in the humanities and social sciences as a synonym of ‘identity’. As Benwell and Stokoe pointed out, many other words are used, often interchangeably, to refer to the concept of identity; among others ‘self’, ‘role’, ‘person’, ‘subject’ etc. (2006: 5).

performance in interaction. A large, interdisciplinary literature developed building on these theoretical milestones (Rapley 1995; Blum-Kulka 1997; Antaki and Widdicombe 1998a; Bailey 2001; Tannen 2005; De Fina et al. 2006; Benwell and Stokoe 2006; Tannen et al. 2007; Bamberg et al. 2007a; Bamberg et al 2011; Greco et al. 2014).

As mentioned in section 1.1.5.2, an attempt at bringing together different approaches to the study of interactional identity was made by Bucholtz and Hall in their 2005 paper. The framework they propose for the analysis of identity in interaction encompasses notions fragmentarily presented by various disciplines: for example, the idea of stance, foregrounded by Bucholtz and Hall as a necessary step in identity work, overlaps with that of positioning developed by discursive psychologists; the distinction they establish between macro-level, local and interactional identities (2005: 592) echoes Zimmerman's classification of transportable, situated and conversational identities (1998); their focus on ethnography and on the importance of cultural and linguistic ideologies is in line with the stress put on cultural differences by Interactional Sociolinguistics.

These considerations, and many others, are organised by Bucholtz and Hall into five principles that describe the nature of identity and its emergence in interaction in an empirical, systematic and 'organic' way: the *emergence* principle, that sees identity as emergent from social interaction rather than as reflected on it; the *positionality* principle, that relates to the distinction between different levels of identity mentioned above; the *indexicality* principle, that illustrates the processes through which identity is indexicalised in interaction; the *relationality* principle, that states that identities are constructed through several complementary relations, such as that of similarity/difference; the *partialness* principle, that explains the ever-shifting nature of interactional identity.

This framework of analysis, bringing together insights from various disciplines, represents one of the most complete and systematic approaches presented to date for the study of identity in interaction.

1.2.3 Performing identity in interaction

After having analysed the notion of interactional identity and the theoretical background that set the scene for its emergence, I would now like to switch perspective and, after discussing interactional identity from the theoretical viewpoint of the analyst, I turn my attention to the 'practicalities' of identity work done by interactants and focus on those that can be considered the 'tools', or methods, that participants use to perform identities in conversation. In fact, as Benwell and Stokoe noted (2006: 35), most of the " 'grand' theories of discourse [...] engage in only the slenderest of ways with actual situated examples of language use, neglecting both linguistic detail and empirical evidence"; the authors then go to ask "how exactly are identities

discursively produced or performed? What is the process or mechanism by which the individual speaker takes up positions in discourse to which they have been summoned?”. Ribeiro (2010: 50) also refers to concepts such as *footing*, *positioning* and *voice* as providing “ways of capturing what we mean by identity or “doing identity work” in everyday conversation”.

As Bucholtz and Hall’s indexicality principle postulates (2005: 594), identity is constructed in interaction through several indexical processes, ranging from the more overt ones such as the use of explicit social category labels, to implicatures and presuppositions, from micro-level conversational moves to linguistic features such as style or code choice.

Among these ‘tools’ available to interactants to construct identities in interaction, two in particular seem to need further discussion, given their rather complex theoretical background: *footing* and *positioning*.

The concept of footing, first introduced by Erving Goffman in *Forms of Talk* (1981), challenges the assumption of a dyadic structure of conversation, based on the traditional notions of *hearer* and *speaker*. Goffman dissects the notion of hearer into several other ‘participation statuses’ (99) such as *addressed recipient*, *‘unaddressed’ recipient*, *ratified participant*, etc. and argues that “an utterance does not carve up the world beyond the speaker into precisely two parts, recipients and non recipients, but rather opens up an array of structurally differentiated possibilities, establishing the participation framework in which the speaker will be guiding his delivery”. As for the notion of speaker, Goffman also offers an alternative taxonomy, specifying the roles of *animator*, who actually utters the words, *author*, that is, “someone who has selected the sentiments that are being expressed” (103), and *principal* “someone whose position is established by the words that are spoken, someone whose beliefs have been told, someone who is committed to what the words say” (ibid.). These three notions together form what Goffman calls the ‘production format’ (104). The ‘participation framework’ and the ‘production format’ provide a structural basis to analyse footing and its changes during an encounter. As for the way participants change footing in interaction, Goffman warns against the view that individuals merely switch from one stance to another, as he considers it too mechanical and simplistic (109). Rather, he argues that when we switch our footing “we are not so much terminating the prior alignment as holding it in abeyance with the understanding that it will almost immediately be reengaged” (ibid.).

The notion of positioning was developed in the field of psychology and particularly in what is referred to as discursive psychology (Hollway 1984; Davies and Harré 1990). The 1990 paper by Davies and Harré *Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves* theorised the concept: the aim of the paper is to propose the concept of *positioning* as a better alternative to the one of *role* in developing a “social psychology of selfhood” (1). According to the authors, whereas the traditional notion of role highlights “static, formal and ritualistic aspects” (ibid.) of

conversations, positioning helps focussing more on the dynamic nature of social encounters. Davies and Harré's work is based on the paradigm of social constructionism, therefore they share the idea of an interactionally constructed self, rejecting the notion of individuals as a "fixed end product(s)" (46): who one is, they argue, "is always an open questions with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one's own and other's discursive practices" (ibid). Positioning, the authors warn, is not just an analyst's tool; rather, it is a real conversational phenomenon (57), as it can be considered the alignment we take up for ourselves and for others in conversation (Ribeiro 2006). Moreover, positioning is mutual and reciprocal (Wetherell 2001: 193), that is, interactants have to deal with conversational positions ascribed to them by others and, at the same time, can project positions on others. Ribeiro, comparing the notion of positioning to the one of footing, argues that whereas the latter captures slighter nuances and micro-shifts in conversation, the former is more stable, although still dynamic and ever-changing (Ribeiro 2006: 52).

Concluding remarks

In conclusion of this chapter I would like to quote a passage from *Identities in Talk* (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998b: 2): the passage is worth quoting at length as it summarises several theoretical principles that I have discussed in the sections above:

The interest for analysts is to see which of those identifications folk actually use, what features those identifications seem to carry, and to what end they are put. The ethnomethodological spirit is to take it that the identity category, the characteristics it affords, and what consequences follow, are all knowable to the analyst only through the understandings displayed by the interactants themselves. Membership of a category is ascribed (and rejected), avowed (and disavowed), displayed (and ignored) in local places and at certain times, and it does these things as part of the interactional work that constitutes people's lives. In other words, the contributors to this book take it not that people passively or latently have this or that identity which then causes feelings and actions, but that they work up and work to this or that identity, for themselves and others, there and then, either as an end in itself or towards some other end.

In dense yet clear prose the authors epitomise what I see as three fundamental points in the study of identity in discourse. Firstly, the aim of the researcher, in line with ethnomethodological principles, is to approach fieldwork and data collection free of idealisations and preconceptions: applied to the study of interactional identity, this means that the analyst should not decide *a priori* what identities will be the object of the study, because this will depend on those that the speakers will make relevant in interaction. Secondly, as I have stated several times in this chapter, identity is not simply *reflected* but *achieved* in interaction and is the result of cooperative work done by interactants. Finally, following Sacks' insight that conversation is not only a way to *say* things but rather to 'get things done', identity work is not just something that individuals perform "as an end in itself", but it can also represent one of the means they use to achieve their other goals.

These are the theoretical milestones on which I base the analysis presented in chapters IV, V ad VI. In investigating identity work carried out by participants, I take advantage of the insights offered by all the disciplines discussed in this chapter, as I believe this multidisciplinary approach to be best suited to the type of study I carry out. Although benefitting also from the contributions of more discourse-analysis-oriented disciplines such as Sociocultural Linguistics, however, my analysis will not go beyond the level of the social categories made relevant by participants in interaction. In other words, whereas Bucholtz and Hall (2008: 158) stated that “as analysts of the sociocultural realm of language use, we need to link individual linguistic forms to interactional moves and then to broader identities, social structures, cultural processes and ideologies”, my analysis will stop halfway through this path, at the level of “broader identities”, as I believe the ‘upper levels’ of “social structures, cultural processes and ideologies” to fall beyond the scope of my study.

Chapter II

Italians and Italian in Australia

Introduction

As mentioned in the Introduction above, the two theoretical chapters, Chapter I and Chapter II, aim to introduce the field of research to which my study belongs, that is, the analysis of identity construction in interaction within the context of contemporary Italian migration to Australia. Therefore, after discussing the notion of interactional identity in Chapter I, in this chapter I analyse the characteristics of contemporary migration flows, comparing them with older ones both from a quantitative and a qualitative point of view. I also discuss other aspects linked to the presence of Italians in Australia which are of interest to my research, such as the study of the language of Italian migrants and the different approaches to the analysis of Italian identity in Australia. In doing this, I also comment on the main bibliographical sources on the topics discussed.

The chapter has a three-fold structure: the first section is devoted to a comparison between 'old' and 'new' Italian migration to Australia; the second one takes into consideration some of the most relevant aspects of the study of the language of Italian migrants and their families; in the third section I discuss different approaches to the study of the identity of Italian migrants in Australia.

2.1 Italian migration to Australia: 'old' and 'new' migrants

In this section I present a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the differences between 'old' and 'new' Italian migration to Australia. I use these somewhat simplistic terms to refer to these two phenomena because I believe they serve well the purpose of highlighting the innovative character of contemporary migration flows. Moreover, in the last few years, these terms have become widely used and accepted with regards to Italian migration to Australia not only in academic research (Baldassar and Pyke 2014; Della Bernardina et al. 2013) but also in everyday use³².

³² From now on I will therefore omit the inverted commas when using the expressions 'old' and 'new' to refer to different cohorts of Italian migrants.

2.1.1 Old migrants: overview of Italian migration to Australia from the 19th century to the 1970s

In the following pages I outline the different stages which characterised Italian migration to Australia from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1970s; I devote considerable attention to these migration vintages as they represent the background against which I establish the opposition with new migrants. The peculiarities of contemporary Italian migration and the need of further academic research on it, I would argue, can only be understood through an in-depth comparison with previous cohorts of migrants.

2.1.1.1 Pre-World War II migration (19th century-1945)

Although it is generally recognised that Italian migration to Australia before the post-World War II mass migration was a relatively small phenomenon, it is certainly worth of attention because of its peculiarity and unique characteristics. Italians who decided to come to Australia in the nineteenth century were an interesting blend of missionaries, adventurers, labourers and intellectuals (Cresciani 2003³³). Missionaries sent by the Roman Catholic Church with the task to convert the Aborigines and bring civilisation to *terra Australis* settled in urban and rural Australia since the early 1840s. In Western Australia, the mission of New Norcia and the short-lived monastery of Subiaco, both founded by Spanish and Italian monks, are examples of Benedictine settlements, respectively of the late 1840s and early 1850s (Cresciani 2003: 30). In the nineteenth century, however, Italy was also regarded as the centre of Renaissance and its history and sophisticated arts were appreciated by the British-Australian culture: a few intellectuals came to Australia attracted by the novelty of the 'new' or were accepted as political refugees escaping from prosecution after the 1848 revolutions (Cresciani 2003: 38). The tumultuous failure of the revolutions, however, caused another, certainly more significant, flow of migrants: while Europe had to face the harsh conditions of its more disadvantaged citizens, the discovery of rich gold deposits in New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia (1850s, 1860s and 1890s respectively) gave birth to a noticeable wave of migration from Britain, continental Europe and, for the first time, from China. As Alcorso points out (1992: 5), the first numerically significant group of Italian migrants arrived at this time: 2000 *ticinesi*³⁴ settled in Victoria and constituted the first Swiss-Italian community in Australia.

Together with some northern Italians, many migrants came from the central and southern regions of the peninsula. Their acceptance by the host country varied and should be considered within the frame of the *White Australia* policy: Italians were seen more favourably

³³ This work, together with Caroline Alcorso's essay on early Italian migration to Australia (1992), is the main source of information on the topic.

³⁴ *Ticinesi* refers to the inhabitants of *Canton Ticino*, the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland.

than Chinese labourers and *kanakas*, Pacific Islanders, and they could also benefit from Italy's cultural prestige and prominence. The reality of the great majority of Italian migrants, however, was dramatically different from Italy's international image: it was not the refined intellectual or artist who migrated to Australia, but the poor and uneducated peasant. A further discrimination was made between northern and southern Italians: later (1948) the *Sydney Morning Herald* was to declare that "Italians, particularly from the North, made good settlers before the war, though some undesirable types got in" (Castles 1992: 39). An actual distinction between 'white Italians' and 'black Italians' was made also by the journal *Smith's Weekly*, where the former were considered a "very desirable class of immigrant (...) law-abiding and honest", while the latter were an "inferior type"³⁵, whose phenotypical attributes did not match with those of the ideal, fair-skinned Anglo-Celtic immigrant³⁶.

The 1901 Census, the first for newly federated Australia, showed that a few thousand Italians were living in the country: the figure of 5678 Italian-born Australians, however, does not take into account those who did not register and, according to Cresciani (2003: 54), a more likely figure would be around 7000 Italians. Overall, only 0.13 per cent of the 14 million Italians who left Italy between the last quarter of the XIX century and World War I came to Australia (Alcorso 1992: 9). In the 1920s, however, the limits on immigration imposed by the American government caused an increase in the flow towards Australia and in 1921, the Census counted 8153 Italians against a more realistic estimate of 15 000 (Cresciani 2003: 54).

As for the settlement of these early Italian migrants, they established closely-knit communities in most Australian states, taking part in the gold rush or working as unskilled labourers, for example as cane cutters in northern Queensland. After a few years some Italians managed to open their own business in the building industry or as retailers; some migrants employed as cane cutters bought their own farms thus becoming employers and attracting resentment from the British settlers. In fact, even though Italians were considered hard workers, their presence was not always well tolerated: they were strongly cooperative and tended to accept higher rates of exploitation including lower wages and fewer work rights. One of the most virulent flare-ups of this anti-Italian sentiment were the riots in Kalgoorlie, WA, against Italian miners (1919 and 1934).

³⁵ In Henderson, L. "Economic or racist?" in *Race relations in Northern Queensland*, ed. H. Reynolds Townsville: University of Queensland Press (cited in Alcorso, 1992: 12).

³⁶ Here is Cresciani's touching description of the experience of the migrants from southern Italy: "It was an escape from the subculture of the undeveloped, primitive, isolated, God-forsaken Italian south [...]. It was also an unconscious, disappointing, and at times brutal reckoning with the reality of colonial Australia, with her prevailing subcultural cringe against foreigners [...] with the isolation of the bush and the alienation of social discrimination"(2003: 50).

2.1.1.2 World War II and the post-war mass migration (1945-1970s)

The years between World War II and the economic boom which took place in north-western Italy in the 1960s are critical for the history of both Italy and Australia, because they shaped the image of the two countries as modern democracies: during the war, Italians living in Australia, since they were officially 'enemy aliens', were imprisoned and interned. Thousands of Italians were also deported to Australia as Prisoners of War and employed as labourers to relieve the manpower shortage, especially on farms. After the conflict, Italy witnessed the largest migratory flow to Australia in its history, with some 280 000 people who migrated by the 1970s (Castles et al. 1992a and 1992b; Alcorso and Alcorso 1992; Bosworth and Ugolini 1992; Cresciani 2003: 97-150).

The imprisonment of Italians living in Australia during the war was often a tragic paradox: many migrants were actually dissidents who had left their country because of opposition to the fascist regime itself. Nonetheless, in Australia, which had no independent foreign policy but considered itself a part of the British Empire, they were treated as fascists and, while anyone of Italian origin was viewed as potentially dangerous, some were classified in the highest-risk categories and therefore deported to military camps (Cresciani 2003: 97-106; Alcorso and Alcorso 1992: 19-28).

Another phenomenon which strongly affected the post-war scenario is the arrival of Italian Prisoners of War (POW) from North and East Africa and India (Alcorso and Alcorso 1992: 31-33; Cresciani 2003: 107-118): with some 18 500 Italian POWs confined in Australia, this phenomenon caused a temporary 50 per cent increase of the Italian-born population in the country and set the scene for post-war mass migration. This measure was adopted in order to face the chronic lack of manpower which, at that time, was worsened by the fact that many Australian men were at war. Italians employed in farms had a chance to come in contact with the Australian style of life and, although following the Geneva Convention all POWs were returned to Italy after the war, many of them came back to Australia as migrants.

In the tragic post-war scenario, in fact, Italy found itself with a surplus of population and its Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi advocated emigration as a necessary 'safety valve', saying that Italians should "learn some languages and go abroad" (Castles 1992: 37). In the same years, Australia was still suffering from its chronic lack of population, and the war experience had made the need of new, imported manpower even more urgent: in 1945 the Australian Labor government set up a *Department of Immigration*, the slogan of the Minister Arthur Calwell being "populate or perish". In the early years, the aim was to keep a ratio of ten British immigrants to every 'foreigner'; the White Australia policy was still dominant and, since not enough British people wanted to come, the preference was given to Slavonic and Baltic migrants, who were considered 'racially acceptable' and, more importantly, anti-communist. The result

was the formation of a two-class system of migration: British and northern Europeans, on the one hand, received assisted passages and full labour-market and civil rights, eastern /southern Europeans, on the other, were directed into less desirable jobs and were treated with suspicion and often overt contempt.

As for Italians, they were not, especially those from the south, among the most desirable types of immigrants: physically and culturally different from the British settlers, they often received a contemptuous and racist treatment from Australian society and were addressed with the scornful names of “wogs”, “dagos” or, particularly in Western Australia, “dings” (Baldassar 2004). On the other hand, nineteenth and early twentieth century migration, together with the experience of the Italian POWs, contributed to create the image of the Italian labourer as a hard-working and tough individual, less demanding with respect to civil and working rights. Consequently, Italians were highly requested as ‘factory fodder’ often relegated to what has been described as the “southern European occupational ghetto” (Panucci et al 1993: 57): heavy, hazardous and enervating jobs, often in remote areas, with lower wages and lack of language courses and training. Construction and agriculture were certainly the fields where Italians were more in demand: most migrants took up unskilled manual jobs and those who had received a technical education in their home country often did not have their qualifications recognised by their employers.

Although the great majority of migrants were men, chain migration has always characterised the Italian experience and, consequently, numerous women and children joined their men in the new country. For most Italian women a factory job was usually the first experience in Australia and the 1971 Census showed that 64 per cent of Italian-born women who migrated in the preceding five years were employed in manufacturing (Panucci et al 1993: 61)³⁷.

It is not unanimously agreed that Italians living in Australia gave life to an actual, homogeneous Italian community. In Kinder (1992: 280) we read for instance:

Some recent histories of Italians in Australia make plain a single Italian community simply does not exist. Italians in Australia brought local or regional allegiances and loyalties with them and from them wove the fabric of their new identity in the fifth continent. (...) We are not, then, considering ‘the Italian community’ but the various Italian communities in Australia.

Other scholars, instead, embrace the idea of an Italian community and argue further for the existence of an Italian-Australian language (see below). Pascoe’s interpretation (1992: 92), for example, is that: “the supra-regionalism which emerged in Australia was patently not a transplanted Italian nationalism [...] Instead, the Italian-Australians were bonded by the processes of interaction with the dominant culture of Australia”. That is to say that the differences within the community were weaker than the differences with the ‘outside’, the host

³⁷ See also Pesman Cooper, R. ‘Italian women and mass migration’, in Bosworth and Ugolini 1992: 191-206.

country: in other words, the fact itself of being in a foreign and often unfriendly environment had the effect of strengthening the connections amongst compatriots, despite the undeniable stubborn regionalism which characterised Italians.

Looking at the figures, the post-war period has been somehow a *unicum* in the history of Italian migration: the 33 000 migrants who arrived between 1945 and 1950 (Castles 1992: 40) seem an enormous figure when compared with previous waves of migration; still, the number was to increase by several times in the following decade. In March 1951 a bilateral accord between Italy and Australia led to a trial of assisted Italian migration: 2 000 migrants per year, provided with financial assistance by both governments, were to be accepted for 5 years. Australian selection, however, was so strict that only 62 out of 8 191 applicants were accepted (ibid.)³⁸.

As figures cited by Castles (1992: 41-43) show, of the total of 280 570 Italian migrants who arrived in Australia between 1947 and 1976, nearly 180 000 came in the decade 1951-1961. With the establishment of the European Economic Community (1958) and the industrial boom in northern Italy, overseas migration became less and less attractive during the 1960s (72 333 net migration between 1961 and 1971), and this, combined with a period of recession in Australia, led to a situation where, in the early 1970s, more Italians were leaving Australia than entering (the first negative figure appears between 1971 and 1976, with 4463 Italians more departing than entering Australia).

The negative balance of the late 1970s thus marked the end of mass migration. Quantitative data show that in the 1980s and 1990s the phenomenon was relatively marginal: according to figures cited in Rubino (2009a: 198), in the 1990s a few hundred people per year, ranging between 336 and 168, moved from Italy to Australia with a permanent visa, which is certainly a small figure when compared to an average of 18 000 migrants per year in the decade between 1951 and 1961. Baldassar (2007; see also Caltabiano and Gianturco 2005, Baldassar and Pyke 2014) argues that this cohort of migrants, in stark contrast with the post-war one, was made up mainly by skilled and professional individuals, who often migrated to Australia to follow an Australian partner. After 2000 the size of the flow gradually increased: data from the 2006 Census show a peak in 2005, when 603 Italian-born immigrants are registered. However, it was only after the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) that hit Italy and Europe in 2008 that the number of Italians coming to Australia started to increase significantly (Moritsch 2012; Baldassar and Pyke 2014; Dalla Bernardina et al. 2013). Before analysing quantitative data regarding the post-GFC migration or 'new' migration, however, in the sections below I describe how the changed circumstances, both on a global and on a nation-wide scale, make contemporary Italian

³⁸ See also Pacifici, V.G., "L'accordo di emigrazione assistita tra l'Italia e l'Australia del 1951", in Bosworth and Ugolini 1992: 139-155.

migration to Australia a completely new phenomenon and one worthy of specific academic attention.

2.1.2 New migrants: contemporary trends in Italian migration to Australia

In this section I present a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the phenomenon of contemporary Italian migration to Australia. With this expression I refer to Italians who migrated to Australia from 2000 onwards, and especially after the 2008 GFC³⁹. As opposed to past waves of Italian migration, which have been widely studied from many different perspectives, contemporary flows are still largely unexplored by empirical, academic works. For this reason, the data and discussion presented in this section are based mainly on primary sources such as the statistical data offered by the *Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection* and the *Australian Bureau of Statistics*; moreover, in particular for the qualitative part of the analysis, I also relied on anecdotal evidence and on my own experience as a new migrant.

Before tackling the analysis of new Italian migration, however, in the following section I introduce the topic by providing an overview of the changes occurred in the last forty years or so in the Italian and Australian scenarios as well as on a global scale.

2.1.2.1 *From the end of mass migration to present (1970s -2010s): forty years of transition*

In the years between the end of mass migration and the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) some major changes occurred not only in regards to the Italian and Australian societies and economies, but also from a wider, global perspective. As for Italy, this is what Cresciani wrote in 2003 (151):

Italians [...] today are no longer venturing their lives in alien lands. On the contrary, they enjoy a degree of economic security, as the fifth or sixth industrial power in the world, as a respected member of the G8, the exclusive club of economic giants. For those who resisted the temptation to emigrate, Italy is today, if not the most comfortable in economic terms, undoubtedly one of the most dignified, humane and civilised places to live in.

Italy's entry into the *European Economic Community* (ECC) in 1957 contributed to promote the economic growth of the *dopoguerra*, the 'post-war era', which led to the 'boom' of the 1950s and 1960s. Not every part of the peninsula, however, enjoyed the same level of welfare: most of the industrial development took place in north-western Italy, which also benefited from its strategic geographic position at the doorstep of the European community. The South, on the other hand, did not manage to keep up with the rest of the country and southerners had to continue looking elsewhere for a better standard of life. According to figures cited by Cresciani

³⁹ As I discuss below, the visa status of many migrants is somewhat hybrid, because, although they enter Australia with a temporary visa, they aim at a long-term or permanent stay. The 'intended length of stay' is therefore probably the most accurate criterion to follow to disambiguate between migrants and visitors.

(2003: 165), 5 million people left the South of Italy between 1963 and 1973. This time, however, although many of them still chose to migrate overseas (Germany, France or Belgium among others) the great majority moved to northern Italy. A double flow of inner migration thus characterised Italy in the 1960s and 1970s: from the South to the North and from the countryside to the cities.

Despite the chronic underdevelopment of its southern regions, in the decades after World War II, Italy became an industrialised nation, an economic and political power recognised by the EEC and, significantly, a country of immigration. In the 1990s, following political instability in the Balkans, a noticeable number of migrants from South-Eastern Europe entered Italy; the great majority were Albanians (63 000 as counted in Cresciani 2003: 169), Serbians and Croatians. These were to be outnumbered later on by Romanians, who became the most significant ethnic group in Italy after Romania became part of the European Community⁴⁰ in 2007 (Barni and Bagna 2008). While these ethnic groups still enter Italy from the north-eastern border, its southern regions, and Sicily in particular, constantly witness the arrival of African refugees and asylum seekers trying to access the country by boat. Sicily is often the gateway to northern Italy and the 'Schengen Area' for Moroccans, Tunisians, Egyptians and also Senegalese, Sudanese and other migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa. Data collected by ISTAT report that, as at 1st January 2014, the number of overseas-born citizens permanently residing in Italy was 4 922 000, which represents more than 7% of the total population⁴¹.

Immigration and internal migration have contributed, among other factors, to another major change that took place in Italy in the years between World War II and now: the shift from dialects to Italian⁴². Italy's cultural richness and, at the same time, its fragmentation and parochialism, are reflected in the linguistic diversity that characterises the country. The diffusion of mass media in the 1950s, together with improvements in the education system and in particular the extension of compulsory education to the age of 14 and later of 16⁴³, largely contributed to the spread of the so-called *standard Italian* and its diastatic (*popular Italian*) and diatopic varieties (*regional Italian*). The phenomenon has an uneven distribution along the peninsula: due also to internal migration, dialects are losing their vitality at a faster pace in the North, whereas in the central and southern regions the presence of dialect is still relatively

⁴⁰ Data from the *Istituto Italiano di Statistica* (ISTAT) show some 900 000 Romanians living in Italy, that is 21% of the total foreign presence in the country (retrieved on 08/12/14 from <http://www.istat.it/it/immigrati>).

⁴¹ Retrieved on 08/12/14 from <http://www.istat.it/it/immigrati>.

⁴² Introducing the topic of Italy's linguistic setting it is important to keep in mind that Italian – or Italo-Romance – dialects, rather than being diastatic or diatopic varieties of the Italian language, are autonomous linguistic systems independently derived from Latin as it was spoken in that particular geographical area.

⁴³ Compulsory education up to 14 years of age was formally introduced by the *Riforma Gentile* in 1923, although it became really effective only in the 1960s, with the reform of the *scuola media*, 'middle school'. In 2006 it was further raised to 16 years of age.

strong⁴⁴.

Since Unification and until recently, the use of dialect had been stigmatised, as it was considered an inferior variety, a primitive language spoken by uneducated people; as national varieties, like popular and standard Italian became more and more common, however, and as they eventually substituted dialect as Italians' first language, it became clear that the vitality of the dialects was at risk⁴⁵. In the last two decades, the sentiment towards dialects has changed and efforts have been made to promote a new image of dialects and stimulate their maintenance in the new generations (Kinder 2009).

In the last five years or so, due to the GFC and to a climate of political instability, Italy's economy, as well as its public image, has dramatically worsened and the words by Cresciani reported above hardly apply to contemporary Italy: the unemployment rate has doubled, from around 6% in 2007 to around 12% in 2014⁴⁶ and the inflation rate is constantly rising. After the years of economic boom in the 1960s and 1980s had encouraged Italians to remain in their home country, the contemporary negative scenario is pushing more and more Italians, especially the young ones, to seek a better quality of life abroad.

Australia, on the other hand, was not hit by the GFC as badly as other countries: its unemployment rate remained fairly low at around 6%⁴⁷ and this makes the country a very alluring destination for migrants seeking better job opportunities. In the four decades between the 1970s and the 2010s, however, Australia also went through some radical changes.

Firstly, I have cursorily noted above that Australia's policy toward immigrants had been, since early non-British migration, one of assimilationism. The newcomers were to be totally immersed in the mainstream 'Anglo-Celtic' society and, as we read in Castles et al. (1992a: 51), "politicians and social scientists believed that any special measures for migrants would hinder assimilation". Therefore, even though most migrants and their children were not proficient in English, there were no special classes for children of non-English-speaking background, no translating services and often no language training for workers. On the other hand, the use of languages other than English in public was socially stigmatised and parents were invited not to use their native language with children at home. Although asked to fully adhere to Australian values, migrants were not equally rewarded with full civil rights (ibid.)

Assimilationism, together with the *White Australia policy*, was finally to be subverted in the 1970s: the Whitlam Labor government (1972-1975) introduced non-discriminatory

⁴⁴ This is, of course, a generalisation, and every dialect has its own history, some northern ones being maintained more than others (De Mauro 1976 and 1993). For a comprehensive picture of the linguistic profile of contemporary Italy I refer to the works by Berruto (2012) and De Mauro (2014).

⁴⁵ For a comprehensive overview of the complex Italian linguistic setting, I refer to the works published by Cortelazzo (1968), De Mauro (1976; 1993) and D'Agostino (2007).

⁴⁶ Retrieved on 31/07/2014 from <http://www.istat.it/archivio>.

⁴⁷ Retrieved on 31/07/2014 from <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS>.

immigration rules and started a revision of the welfare system for migrants. The speech given by Minister for Immigration Al Grassby in June 1974, *Credo for a nation*⁴⁸ formally initiated the era of *multicultural* Australia; during the Fraser Liberal government (1975-1982) the process was partly continued, even though with a stronger focus on cultural pluralism rather than on welfare policies (Castles 1992a: 53). The *Special Broadcasting Service* (SBS), which offers multicultural and multilingual radio and television services, was first introduced in the 1980s, together with other institutions such as the *Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs* and the *Adult Migrant Education Service*.

Overall, in the four decades between 1970 and 2010, Australia shifted, as the sociologist Jerzy Smolicz put it, from a “migrant country” to a “multicultural nation”. In his 1997 article he argues that Australia, as a multicultural nation

Shares a whole gamut of cultural values, is not monoethnic or monocultural, and does not harbor beliefs about descent from a common ancestry - either biological or cultural. (...). The Australian nation cannot be squeezed back into the Anglo-Celtic box, which it outgrew long ago and which, from an Aboriginal perspective, was a misfit from the start.

Another fundamental change that Australia underwent in recent years is the reorganisation of the immigration system: once based on ethnic categories, immigration to Australia is now regulated by the points system, the only exception being sponsored migration, which means that the visa is sponsored by an Australian or overseas employer. The *General Skilled Migration Program* is for those who have skills and qualifications in high demand in Australia, but applicants must reach a ‘pass mark’ in the points score to be granted a visa. The criteria followed to assign the points are, among others, qualifications, work experience and English proficiency.

Another significant innovation in the system of Australian visas is the introduction of the *Working Holiday (WH) Visa*: this temporary visa was first introduced in 1975 though its popularity dramatically increased only after 2000 (Tan et al. 2009). In 1975 it was only available for British and Canadian citizens, while in 2000 other 17 countries, and Italy among them, were included in the scheme. At the same time, some of the conditions of the WH Visa were changed: an extension of work and study rights from 3 to 6 and 4 months respectively was added and, more importantly, visa holders were given the opportunity to apply for a second year of WH Visa after satisfying certain criteria⁴⁹. Following this reassessment, the number of arrivals with a WH Visa grew by 150% (Tan et al. 2009)⁵⁰. The WH Visa is conceived as a means made available to

⁴⁸For the text of the speech see Grassby, A.J., *Credo for a nation: an address ... to the Family of the Nation Rally at the Sydney Opera House on Sunday 9 June 1974*, Australian Department of Immigration.

⁴⁹As a way to revitalise rural Australia and to provide rural employers with cheap, or even free, manpower, to apply for a second year of WH visa the applicant must have worked for at least 88 days outside Australia’s capital cities.

⁵⁰As for Italy, figures show a dramatic increase in the number of visas granted from 2004 onwards: whereas between 2000 and 2004 the number of visas granted to Italians ranged between 139 (2000-2001) and 0 (2001-2002), between 2004 and 2009 it rapidly escalated from 506 to 3151 (Tan et al. 2009: 4).

young people (only applicants between 18 and 30 years of age are accepted) to experience a short- or medium-term stay in Australia. The primary purpose of the stay should be travelling, even though the work limits are not very strict. The WH Visa is thus becoming a first step in the migration process for those who are willing to move permanently to Australia but can not apply for other visas⁵¹; the simple application process, limited cost and high flexibility, together with the possibility to work in Australia for up to two years, make the WH Visa an option very popular among European and Asian youth. While in Australia, those who look at a longer (or permanent) stay, can gain some work experience, improve their language or even meet a potential sponsor.

Finally, Australia offers the opportunity to apply for a *Student* Visa to study in Australia at different education levels. Student Visas are becoming a very popular choice among Italians and other migrants, and, together with the WH Visa, they are one of the defining trends of contemporary migration to Australia. A Student Visa also allows the visa holder to work part time up to a maximum of 20 hours per week during semester time and to work full time during holidays. For this reason, together with the fact that Student Visas do not have age limits, this option is becoming more and more popular among Italians who want to migrate to Australia but can not apply for other visa categories, and also as a bridging solution for those who are already in Australia with a WH Visa and are still not eligible to apply for temporary or permanent residency. Moreover, in the point-based Australian immigration system, holding an Australian degree of the duration of at least two years provides the applicant with a higher 'score'.

Finally, looking at a world-wide scale, the improvement of communication media and, in particular, the widespread use of the Internet from the late 1990s, seems to be reshaping the idea of migration itself. Distances have been somehow shortened thanks not only to cheaper airfares and phone-calls, but also to a completely new array of technological innovations available to migrants to keep in contact with family and friends. E-mails, social networks and, above all, *Skype* made communication easier, faster and mostly cost free. Thanks to the Internet, migrants can check newspapers' websites, listen to radio stations and watch television channels from their home country. Still a radical and emotionally tough choice, migrating is, to some extent, thanks to technological innovations easier now than it was for post-war migrants.

From a linguistic point of view, language maintenance in the first and subsequent generations of migrants is also likely to highly benefit from more frequent contacts with the country of origin and its language. Although studies on this topic are still scarce, a paper by Rubino (2009a) specifically focusing on linguistic maintenance in recent Italian migrants to Australia seems to confirm this assumption.

This work by Rubino, although targeting a different social group, has great relevance for

⁵¹ According to statistics cited in Tan et al (2009: 11) 18% of WH Visa holders declare their intention to return and live in Australia.

my research because it represents the first paper, in the Australian panorama, that brought more recent flows of Italian migration back into the spotlight of sociolinguistic studies. Overall, studies on this cohort of Italian migrants are still scarce: from a psychological point of view, an article appeared on the *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* (Sala, Dandy, & Rapley, 2010) looks at the second and third generations of migrants from the point of view of the recent first generation. Anthropologist Loretta Baldassar also devoted her attention to different cohorts of Italian migrants in Australia, including in her studies what she calls the “post-1970s cohort” (Baldassar and Pyke 2014) and, more importantly, the most recent one of ‘new migrants’ (ibid.).

2.1.2.2 Quantitative and qualitative analysis of contemporary migration flows

As noted above, contemporary Italian migration is, for many aspects, radically different from the post-war one, and in the following pages I attempt a discussion of the main characteristics of this phenomenon. Given the scarcity of both quantitative and qualitative reliable academic sources on the topic, however, I have to rely also on anecdotal evidence and on information gathered from my own experience as a new migrant.

Quantitative data on new migrants

From a quantitative point of view, providing accurate and realistic figures, even using official statistics, is quite challenging, given the frequent overlap between temporary and permanent visas; in particular, as commented above, the hybrid condition of many WH and Student Visa holders is what creates considerable ambiguity in the quantitative analysis of contemporary migration flows.

WH, Student and Visitor Visa holders, together with other temporary visa categories⁵², form what the statistics published by the *Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection*⁵³ refers to as ‘temporary entrants’ (TE). Table 1 below shows figures relative to this category for the past two years:

⁵² See the Department’s quarterly publication ‘Temporary Entrants and New Zealand citizens’ for further details; see also Dalla Bernardina 2013 (4-7) for a discussion of the topic.

⁵³ This is how the department was recently renamed after being referred to as the *Department of Immigration and Citizenship* (DIAC) between 2007 and 2013 (<http://www.immi.gov.au/about/anniversary/whats-in-a-name>, accessed on 02/08/2014).

Table 1: Italian temporary entrants (March 2013-June2014)⁵⁴

VISA CATEGORY	Visitor	Student	Working Holiday	Temporary Skilled '457'	Temporary Graduate	Other	Bridging	Total
31/03/2013	3120	2360	10420	2440	70	290	760	19460
30/06/2013	2400	2030	9660	2420	50	270	730	17550
30/09/2013	2610	2510	9660	2670	50	310	810	18610
31/12/2013	9390	2510	11780	2430	40	270	830	27250
31/03/2014	2910	3500	12530	3080	40	330	980	23360
30/06/2014	2440	3210	11020	2940	40	340	940	20920

Whereas the table above shows a physiological seasonal variation in the total number of TE due to the significantly higher number of visitors during the summer months, it also suggests an overall increase of Italian TE between 2013 and 2014: comparing the figures relative to March and June, for instance, we see an increase of about 20%.

Data become even more significant if we compare the number of TE in the past five years (Dalla Bernardina et al. 2013:6): while until 2009 the total number of TE ranged, considering seasonal variation, between 5 000 and 15 000, from the end of 2011 onwards we find bottom-of-the-range values of about 12500 and top-of-the-range ones of more than 25 000, with a peak in December 2013 (27 250) which is likely to be surpassed in 2014.

Although these figures are not significant *per se* with regards to permanent settlement, the constant rise in the number of Italian TE, and of the WH, Student and '457' visa holders in particular, is likely to hint at deeper and more stable dynamics. Taking a closer look at the figures relating to these three visa subclasses, for example, one can see that the popularity among young Italians of the WH Visa gradually increased since 2009 and boomed after 2012

⁵⁴ Adapted from <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/statistical-info/temp-entrants> (accessed on 04/11/2014).

Table 2 - Total number of Working Holiday Visas granted to Italian citizens⁵⁵

Year	Number of WH Visas
2009	3242
2010	3871
2011	5092
2012	9078
2013	9665

Even more relevant, however, is the exponential increase in the number of second WH Visas granted to Italians:

Table 3 - Number of second Working Holiday Visas granted to Italian citizens⁵⁶

Year	Number of 2 nd WH Visas
2009	225
2010	363
2011	531
2012	874
2013	1765

As shown in Table 3, this number more than doubled between 2012 and 2013, with an increase of 101. 9% that makes Italy the country with the highest increase in the number of second WH Visas granted. This figure, I would argue, is particularly significant as a second WH visa often means that the applicant is aiming at a longer, if not permanent, stay.

As for the Student Visa, the interpretation and the significance of the figures are somewhat similar to the ones discussed for the WH Visa: out of the total number of Student Visa granted to Italians, particularly relevant is the figure of those granted onshore (Dalla Bernardina et al 2013: 18), as an onshore application signals the applicant's intention to prolong the stay in the country and often represents a further step towards long-term settlement.

⁵⁵ Adapted from <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/pdf/working-holiday-report-dec13>, p.19 (accessed on the 02/08/ 2014).

⁵⁶ Retrieved on the 02/08/ 2014 from <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/pdf/working-holiday-report-dec13>, p.20.

Table 4 - Total number of Student Visas granted to Italian citizens OFFSHORE⁵⁷

Year	Number of OFFSHORE
	Student Visas
2009	891
2010	913
2011	1007
2012	1282
2013	1517

Table 5 - Total number of Student Visas granted to Italian citizens ONSHORE⁵⁸

Year	Number of ONSHORE
	Student Visas
2009	643
2010	845
2011	948
2012	1348
2013	1785

Of the different Student visa categories available, the fastest growing in popularity among Italians are the *English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) Visas* and the *Vocational Education and Training (VET) Visas*, as the following table shows

Table 6 –Student Visa subclasses⁵⁹

Visa subclass	ELICOS	Schools	VET	Higher Education	Postgraduate	Non-award	Total
2009	316	313	418	187	62	253	1 549
2010	499	251	487	193	67	239	1 736
2011	569	343	510	216	80	237	1 955
2012	900	419	773	179	101	258	2 540
2013	1108	426	1171	210	120	264	3 302

⁵⁷ Adapted from http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/study/_pdf/student-visa-program-trends-2012-13, p.19 (accessed on the 02/08/ 2014).

⁵⁸ Adapted from http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/study/_pdf/student-visa-program-trends-2012-13, p.20 (accessed on the 02/08/ 2014).

⁵⁹ Adapted from Dalla Bernardina et al. 2013: 17.

Among ‘temporary entrants’ are also those who hold a *Temporary work (Skilled) Visa*, commonly referred to as ‘457 Visa’: this visa, which allows the holder to work for the sponsoring employer for a maximum of four years, represents a direct path towards *Permanent Residency (PR)*, as after two years on a ‘457’ Visa the holder can apply for a permanent visa. The following table shows the recent increase in the number of Italians holding a ‘457’ Visa:

Table 7 – Number of Temporary Skilled (‘457’) Visa⁶⁰

Year	Number of ‘457’ Visas
2008	859
2009	853
2010	657
2011	918
2012	1380

Coming to the so-called ‘permanent additions’, as a result of the reorganisation of the Australian immigration system, and, in particular, of the condition mentioned above that allows migrants to apply for PR after two years on a ‘457’ Visa, a significant percentage (66% in 2013) of Permanent Residencies are now granted to onshore applicants:

Table 8 - Italian ‘Permanent additions’⁶¹

Year	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Total	584	614	656	805	924
Offshore	205	259	196	301	311
Onshore	379	355	460	504	613

Finally, the number of Italians becoming Australian citizens remained fairly stable in the last five years, with ups and downs ranging between 488 (2009) and 694 (2013) (Dalla Bernardina et al. 2013: 34). This stability, however, is not surprising: considering that to apply for citizenship one must have lived in Australia permanently for at least five years, one can see that current citizenship figures do not reflect the significant increase in the number of arrivals that took place

⁶⁰ Adapted from Dalla Bernardina et al. 2013: 26.

⁶¹ Adapted from from Dalla Bernardina et al. 2013: 32. See also official data on <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/statistical-info/oad/perm-add> (accessed on the 03/08/2014).

from around 2010 onwards. This figure, however, will become quite significant in the next few years, and will possibly contribute to disambiguate between the temporary or permanent character of contemporary migrant flows.

In fact, the only two (non academic) sources which attempt a quantitative analysis of new migrants come to different, even contrasting conclusions: Moritsch's report (2012) aims to demonstrate that, despite the enthusiasm of Italian communication media in over-reporting, the phenomenon is limited in size and temporary in character (29). Dalla Bernardina et al. 2013, on the other hand, although representing the most complete and reliable survey on contemporary Italian migration to Australia, seem to support a very misleading argument: comparing the number of Italians who entered Australia in 2012-2013 with that of 1950-1951, they come to the conclusion that contemporary migration is reaching, if not surpassing, the size of the post-war one. However, not only is their calculation not accurate⁶², but the comparison itself, I would argue, is not appropriate: as discussed in the pages above, although many Italians arriving in Australia with a Student or a WH visa may have the intention to settle permanently in the country, the majority of them are probably just looking for a short-term experience. For this reason, not only does the figure they cite of some 20 000 Italians arrived in Australia in 2012-2013 seem to be inaccurate, it also has an altogether different meaning to the ones referring to post-war migrants, as the latter were, for the great majority, relocating permanently to Australia.

In conclusion, a closer look at quantitative data referring to new migrants suggests that, although not comparable in size with former waves of migration, the phenomenon certainly had a significant increase in the last five years or so. Moreover, given the complex intertwining between different visa categories, it is very difficult to provide accurate figures about net permanent migration for each year. What makes contemporary Italian migration to Australia a unique and fascinating phenomenon, however, is the way it differs from previous cohorts of migrants, which I will analyse in the following section.

Qualitative analysis of contemporary migration flows

New arrivals seem to have dramatically different characteristics compared to the post-war ones: firstly, as a result of Australian immigration policies, Italian migrants from the 1990s onwards were mainly skilled migrants (Rubino 2009a; Baldassar and Pyke 2014), and this trend is confirmed in recent flows.

Secondly, regarding education, new migrants usually hold a tertiary degree, bachelor or

⁶² By adding up the numbers of Italians who entered Australia in 2012-2013 with a Working Holiday and that of those who were granted a 457 or Student visa, they obtain the figure of 20 975 (35). This number, however, is not accurate because, firstly, the figure they cite for the WHM programme (15 973) is not confirmed by the Department official publications; secondly, the number of 457 and Student visa granted is not indicative of actual new arrivals as these visa categories are often granted to onshore applicants.

higher, and, once in Australia, they often seek a position in line with their professional qualification. Many of them are also willing to progress further in their study with a higher education degree. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that in the last few years, the worsening of the economic situation in Europe and in Italy in particular, and the constant rising of the Italian unemployment rate are also pushing individuals with a secondary qualification, such as tradesmen, towards the path of migration. Should the negative trend of Italian economy continue in the next few years, contemporary Italian migration, I would argue, could partly lose the character of élite migration and become more similar to historical migration inasmuch as it includes individual with lower educational levels.

Another relevant point of difference between new and old migrants is their linguistic repertoire: whereas post-war migrants were mainly dialect speakers, I have noted above that Italian has now substituted dialect as the first language for most Italians. As a result, Italians arriving in Australia are fluent in standard Italian or, at least, in a regional variety of it; some of them are also fluent, and most of them have at least a passive competence, in their dialect of origin. Data from the present research contribute to analyse the role that dialect, despite its gradual decline after the 1950s, still has for many young Italians (see section 6.1 in Chapter VI).

Finally, the linguistic repertoire of new Italian migrants at the time of arrival also includes English, which Italians now study since primary school. Most of them have at least a basic competence of the language, and many decide, as a first step towards their job search, to enrol in a language course as they arrive in Australia.

As for geographical origin of new migrants, anecdotal evidence suggests that a significant percentage of new arrivals originate from northern Italian regions: although official nation-wide data are not available, a study carried out in New South Wales (Moritsch 2012) seems to confirm this trend, as it shows that 52% of Italian-born individuals added to the *AIRE*⁶³, the register of Italians residing overseas, between 2009 and 2013 were from the North, 29% from the centre, 11% from the South and 8% from the islands (10). This is also in contrast with post-war migration, which originated mainly from the South (see section 2.1.1.2).

Another unique feature of contemporary migration is the role that the Internet has in the shaping of its characteristics. In fact, when I first started researching on contemporary Italian migration to Australia (2010) the topic was still basically unexplored not only by academic works but also by the media (websites, social networks, newspapers, TV, etc.); as the effects of the GFC on Italian economy worsened and as the numbers of Italians leaving the country kept rising, so did the interest in this new 'wave' of Italian migration. Almost five years later, the significant flow of young Italians arriving in Australia every year has become a well recognised phenomenon. The Web indeed plays a crucial role in shaping the characteristics and image of this new 'diaspora': in

⁶³ "Anagrafe degli Italiani Residenti all'Estero", 'register of Italians residing overseas'.

the last two years or so, it has flourished with hundreds of websites and blogs offering advice on visas, language acquisition, employment opportunities, and Australian lifestyle to Italians wanting to migrate. Social networks also reflect the popularity of Australia among young Italians wanting to leave the country: *Facebook*, for example, now offers dozens of pages and groups on the topic, ranging from those providing general information about life in Australia, to more specific ones such as the group *Italians in Perth*⁶⁴. For those who are still in Italy, such websites and *Facebook* groups offer the opportunity to gather (more or less reliable) first-hand information and advice from those who are already living in Australia and, for the latter, these virtual spaces also represent an unprecedented opportunity to socialise not only virtually but often also in real life.

In fact, socialisation among Italians in Australia is one of the main objectives of many *Facebook* groups, and members often organise meetings, dinner parties or day trips. The description of the group *New Italians in Australia*, for instance, reads “Let’s meet up here and let’s keep in touch to organise nights out, meetings, and to help each other out!!”⁶⁵. This group is also particularly relevant because of the use of the adjective ‘new’ to describe Italians who recently migrated to Australia; this gives a further confirmation of what I discussed in the opening of this chapter, that is, that this ‘label’ has now entered the public domain of communication media, contributing to create awareness about the peculiarity of contemporary Italian migration.

These websites, blogs and online groups, I would argue, play a critical role in the definition of the migration experience for new migrants and in the shaping of the new Italian-Australian community. Whereas decades ago the only way to gather pre-departure information or post-departure support was to know someone, often a relative or a *paesano*, ‘fellow townspeople’, already living in Australia, new migrants can now get in contact virtually with thousands of people sharing their experience. These online realities are still a fairly new phenomenon, as they only became really popular in the last couple of years, but they have the potential to create a whole new idea of Italian community in Australia; it will be interesting to see, for example, what effect they will have on the connections between new and old migrants, as the support traditionally given to new migrants by the established Italian-Australian community may be replaced by the one offered by these online realities. The article by Baldassar and Pyke (2014) cited above, for example, specifically targets the topic of intra-diaspora knowledge transfer and the relationship between different cohorts of migrants; the authors of this study, although mentioning that new migrants often deploy “on-line mediums to research

⁶⁴ “Italiani a Perth – Western Australia” (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/IAPWA>, accessed on 30/07/2014).

⁶⁵ “Riuniamoci qui e teniamoci in contatto per organizzare serate, incontri e darci una mano a vicenda!!” (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/25792745812/>; accessed on 30/07/2014).

potential professional contacts in Australia of Italian birth or heritage”, conclude that “the post-war community represent an important source of knowledge and support for new arrivals” (11). This, I would argue, is becoming less true as the spread of online communities increases; on the contrary, the consolidation of the group identity of ‘new’ Italians in Australia may strengthen the tensions between different cohorts of migrants⁶⁶.

2.2 Past and new trends in the study of the language of Italian migrants in Australia

The presence of the Italian language in Australia reaches back to the early stages of white settlement in the country. Before the advent of the first Italian migrants, Italian was studied as the language of high culture *par excellence*; after the years of mass migration Italian became the most widely spoken language other than English but the needs of the community remained basically unattended by the Australian government until the first national language policy in 1987. In the same decade, after the first pioneering studies of the late 1960s and 1970s, there was a dramatic increase in publications that analysed the language of Italian migrants, and the trend remained stable in the 1990s⁶⁷. In recent years, Italian has lost his status of most spoken community language in Australia in favour of Chinese varieties, but research on the language of the first, second and third generations of migrants is still quite prolific.

As Kinder warns in his 1990 ‘historiography’ of Italian in Australia (77), “any attempt [...] to carve up a historical continuum into periods is bound to be arbitrary and to have principally convenience value”; apart from the first pioneering studies of the 1960s and 1970s (Andreoni 1967, 1971 and 1978; Rando 1970 and 1973), which were quite homogeneously lexicographical, in the 1980s the study of Italian in Australia began taking different, sometimes intertwined paths. In the same passage quoted above, Kinder argues further that “with the emergence of new, even radically new, directions, pre-existing modes of research have remained alive, all of which produce at present a composite, multi-layered attack on a complex, multi-dimensional problem”. In the last twenty years, with the ageing of first generation migrants, the coming to age of the second generation and, in the last decade, of the third, an abundant corpus of data has also become available to researchers focusing on trans-generational language dynamics⁶⁸.

⁶⁶ See the interesting discussion about different stances towards the Italian and Australian ethnic identities in different cohorts of Italian migrants in Baldassar and Pyke 2014.

⁶⁷ As De Mauro points out in his foreword to Bettoni 1986, it was only from the 1960s that studies on the linguistic realities of migrant communities began to spread. Not only with regards to Italian but also to the general linguistic environment of the mid-twentieth century, he highlights several factors for this delay in the research of languages in contact (see Bettoni 1986: 6-8), above all the lack of interest in the sociolinguistic aspects of linguistics.

⁶⁸ In the following pages I present a concise overview of the most relevant literature in the field up to date. For further reference see the detailed bibliographies compiled by Bettoni and Kinder (1987), Kinder (1990)

Overall, in the last thirty years or so, quantitative and qualitative studies, macro- and micro-sociolinguistic researches and works inspired by different linguistic paradigms appeared with such an entangled pattern that any discrete partition is, as Kinder put it, arbitrary and convenience-bound. In the overview I present in the following pages I highlight four main areas of research: *linguistic transferences, language shift, language attrition and micro-sociolinguistic and pragmatic studies*. Although studies on linguistic transference did represent the beginning of the research on Italian in Australia, these areas of research are not to be intended as chronologically discrete phases; rather, they are deeply intertwined, often overlapping approaches to a multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon.

2.2.1 Studies on linguistic transference

As I have cursorily noted above, the first studies that tackled the language of Italian migrants in Australia had a strong lexicographical focus. The first study dates back to 1967, with Andreoni's *Australitalian*: Andreoni argued for the existence of a language created by migrants by incorporating integrated and unintegrated transfers from Australian English to a basis of popular Italian. The notion of *Australitaliano*, however was far from being universally accepted and generated an intense debate among scholars⁶⁹.

After a few years with little or no publications, the 1980s can probably be considered the 'golden age' of research into Italian in Australia. It was in these years that the subject began to be studied with a more scientific approach. Bettoni's *Italian in North Queensland* was published in 1981 and it is, as Clyne put it in the foreword to this work, "the first large-scale serious linguistic investigation of Australia's most widespread community language other than English". With the adjective 'serious' Clyne is marking the break in continuity with previous studies and, in fact, Bettoni's research applies for the first time in Australia the rigorous sociolinguistic paradigm already diffused in the US. Although her analysis is still based on transferences, she also takes into account levels other than the lexical one, such as the phonetic, prosodic, semantic and pragmatic ones.

Rando (1990) and the regular bibliographical surveys, currently edited by Antonia Rubino, *Italiano e dialetti italiani fuori d'Italia*, published in *Rivista Italiana di Dialettologia*, the most recent being 2012.

⁶⁹ See for example what Clyne writes in his foreword to Bettoni's *Italian in North Queensland* (1981): "there are almost as many varieties of 'Australian Italian' as there are speakers, and the notion of a rapidly developing stable language [...] cannot be justified". Later on Kinder argues: "there is no such thing as a new Italo-Australian language or dialect. There is a common core of English items in the vocabulary of most Italians but the number and identities of these neologisms have never been demonstrated" (1990: 284).

2.2.2 Language shift

Language shift in the Italian community in Australia has been analysed both from a quantitative and from a qualitative perspective: studies carried out by Clyne, Kipp and others (Clyne 1991, 2002, 2005; Kipp, Clyne & Pauwels 1995; Kipp & Clyne 2003) analyse Census data on community languages highlighting, among other trends, the one of language maintenance/shift. In the 1995 study, the authors included an excellent literature survey on the topic of language shift (115-133) that sets the background against which the 1991 Census data have been analysed.

Looking at quantitative studies based on Census data, the Italian community proves to maintain its language fairly well: in Kipp and Clyne's (2003) analysis of the 2001 Census⁷⁰ Italian shows a rate of language shift of 15.9%⁷¹, situated towards the middle, between the lowest rate of 2.4% for Vietnamese and the highest of 62.6% for Dutch. Overall, it can easily be observed that countries of more recent migration (Asian, African, Middle-Eastern and some South-American countries) tend to maintain their ethnic language more, while countries of historical migration to Australia (Northern, Western and partly Southern Europe) show high rates of language shift. It is among them that Italy proves to be particularly 'conservative': its rate is four times smaller than the one of the Netherlands (closely followed by Austria and Germany) and more than half the one of France. The only European countries that maintain their language more than Italy are Turkey and, most significantly, Greece (with 7.1%).

Among the factors responsible for language maintenance/shift, Bettoni and Gibbons (1988) pointed out the attitude of Italian migrants towards their L1, which was, in the majority of speakers, their regional dialect. The rate, however, is still fairly low when compared to the Dutch or the Germans: this, in turn, can be explained by a greater cultural distance between the ethnic community and the one of the host country and by the fact that Italians tended to form very closely-knit communities⁷² and favoured endogamy. The gap between Italian and Greek is not as easily explained: quite convincing, in this case, is the theory of 'core values' proposed by Smolicz (see below). According to Smolicz (1981), Greeks tend to consider language as a central and self-identifying value of their culture and are therefore more likely to maintain it in a migratory context.

⁷⁰ Studies based on census data must cope with the discontinuity in the questions proposed by the census: in 2001, for example, the question about parents' birthplace was excluded, thus making an analysis of the second generation impossible. It included instead a question on ancestries, thus eliciting very significant data for those situations where the subjects' birthplace does not match with their ancestry (see for example the case of Vietnamese migrants of Chinese origin).

⁷¹ The language shift rate for the first generation is calculated as the percentage of speakers born in a particular country who now declare to speak only English in the home domain (Kipp & Clyne 2003: 33).

⁷² This assumption seems to be confirmed by the fact that language shift rates are higher in those states where Italian migration is less significant: Tasmania is at the top with a 27.8% that nearly doubles the average, while Victoria is at the bottom with 13.9%. Western Australia scores an average 17.5%. (data from Kipp and Clyne 2003: 40).

Coming to qualitative studies, in the late 1980s, the *guise-voice* study presented by Bettoni and Gibbons (1988) aimed at establishing whether overt judgments correspond to covert attitudes towards ethnic varieties (dialects and mixtures of English and regional Italian) and therefore whether covert negative attitudes can contribute to a faster shift to English. The results clearly showed that, whereas regional Italian and English were seen very favourably, dialects, and especially mixtures, received heavily negative ratings. Italian was probably highly considered because of its prestige as a language of culture, and was therefore the language most likely to be maintained. For the majority of migrants, however, it was not the first language, therefore, rather than a matter of maintenance, it was a matter of re-learning.

From the 1980s to date, research into language maintenance and language shift has been very prolific: among others, Bettoni (1981, 1983, 1989, 1991b) Bettoni and Rubino (1996)⁷³, and Rubino (2003a)⁷⁴ address the topic from diverse and original perspectives; in more recent years, Cavallaro's recently published doctoral thesis (2010) constitutes the first systematic study on the third generation of Italian migrants, whereas Rubino's work cited above (2009a) tackles language maintenance strategies of Italian women recently migrated to Australia.

2.2.3 Language attrition

Besides research into language maintenance/shift, several studies on language attrition were also published in the last three decades. The numerous labels that the phenomenon has received throughout the years, 'language loss', 'language death', and 'language disintegration' among others (see Caruso 2010: 19) reflect the complexity and the multi-faceted nature of the subject. Once again, the merit of introducing and systematically developing research into language attrition in the Italian-Australian community goes to Camilla Bettoni: her project on language attrition, commenced in 1984 and continued throughout the following decade (1985, 1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1991b), aims to prove the thesis that along the continuum of communicative modes that spans from the pragmatic to the syntactic one, a migrant language on its way to extinction would move from a more syntactic to a more pragmatic mode.

Early observations on the role of birth order during her 1985 analysis lead to a paper specifically devoted to this variable (1986). Further studies by Bettoni (1991b) deepened the

⁷³ This research is particularly interesting because the authors try to fill the space between the micro-sociolinguistic and the quantitative macro-sociolinguistic approach, focusing on what lies halfway, that is the community. The study, establishing a clear-cut distinction among the three languages that form migrants' repertoire (i.e. English, Italian and dialect) analyses the use of the three varieties in different domains (home, work, friends, etc.), thus providing a complete picture of the rate at which Italian and dialect are losing ground with respect to English.

⁷⁴ The focus of this study, which, in turn, aims to integrate the micro- and the macro-sociolinguistic level (310), is on the linguistic practices of a young woman of Sicilian origin (see also Rubino 2004 and 2006) and Rubino's attention is drawn towards the influence on language maintenance of an individual's "fase di vita", 'phase of life', and of the phase that the ethnic community is going through.

analysis of the phenomenon into the morphological attrition undergone by migrants' Italian language: attrition was found to be active at different degrees in different morphological areas, with the nominal system displaying a lower degree of simplification if compared to the pronominal and the verbal ones. Attrition in the verb system is the main focus of Caruso's recent work (2010) which analyses the role of markedness in the attrition process. Unmarked tenses, like *Presente* and *Imperfetto*, tend to be more easily maintained by both generations, while, on the other end of the continuum, *Futuro anteriore* e *Trapassato prossimo*, tenses with a high level of markedness, tend to be lost early in the attrition process (189-190).

2.2.4 Micro-sociolinguistic and pragmatic studies

Another large corpus of research is represented by the numerous micro-sociolinguistic and pragmatic studies that explore the linguistic practices of individuals or families: as Kinder put it in his 1990 overview (79), since the mid-1980s, there has been a "change of focus from broadly-conceived consideration of language choice across groups of people to examination of the language behaviour of individual speakers in specific situations". In other words, there has been a shift from macro- to micro-sociolinguistics or, to put it yet in another way, the focus has changed from the product – the language – to the process, that is, to language use and users⁷⁵. Among others, speakers' awareness of their language choices is highlighted in Kinder's studies on the verbal marking of transference in first-generation Italian migrants in New Zealand (1985, 1986, 1987, 1988); Rubino (1987, 1990 and 2006) focuses on the language practices of second-generation migrants, whereas Rubino 1992 explores those of a young first-generation woman with her children. Rubino 2006 is particularly interesting because part of the data she analyses come from the participant's linguistic diary, that is, the corpus of notes taken by Stephanie (a second generation woman of Sicilian origin, see also Rubino 2003b and 2004) on her everyday linguistic practices. This, together with the fact that the researcher discussed the data with the participant and recorded her comments, gives us an insight into the speaker's overt attitudes towards the language varieties she uses.

2.3 Approaches to the study of Italian identity in Australia

I present here three approaches to the study of the identity of Italian migrants in Australia. The first one discussed is the one of humanistic sociology and, in particular, the theory of Core Values. Although I found some insights of this theory useful for my research, I discuss it here

⁷⁵ Presenting the anthology *Italian Abroad*, Bettoni (1986) wrote: "Italian abroad has finally begun to benefit from a shift away from a purely linguistic approach towards a more anthropological and social framework in which language users and language uses as well as language per se are the focus of academic interest" (20).

mainly to point out the difference between this approach to migrants' identity, somewhat 'static' and based on the notion of ethnic group, and the two other approaches presented, namely, Transnationalism and the Interactional approach, more focused on migrants' dynamic and ever-changing status.

2.3.1 The theory of Core Values

The Polish-born sociologist Jerzy Smolicz is one of the most prestigious scholars in the field established by his compatriot Florian Znaniecki, the father of humanistic-sociology⁷⁶. Smolicz interpreted the dynamics of migration and multiculturalism in the light of the theory of Core Values (CV). Here is how he introduces the concept of CV in his foundational essay *Core values and cultural identity* (1981: 75):

Core values can be regarded as forming one of the most fundamental components of a group's culture. They generally represent the heartland of the ideological system and act as identifying values which are symbolic of the group and its membership. Rejection of core values carries with it the threat of exclusion from the group. [...] Indeed, it is through core values that social groups can be identified as distinctive ethnic, religious, scientific or other cultural communities.

CVs can hence be considered the 'living essence' of an ethnic group, the features that a given social group regards as identifying of its culture. Ethnic groups usually share more than one CV: the connections among them are multiple and fascinating and the hierarchy shifting and dynamic. Looking at the case of the Jewish ethnic group, for instance, one can see how the preservation of a CV can lead to a subsequent rediscovery of another, previously neglected, feature of that culture. According to Smolicz, the three main CVs for Jewish people are *religion*, *peoplehood* and *historicity* (1981: 77): the strong sense of ethnicity built through the preservation of these values and the foundation of the Israeli state-nation, however, led to a rediscovery of Hebrew, which had long been retained only for ritual and sacred pursuits.

CVs can be viewed either in their original setting or as transported by migrants in plural societies (Smolicz 1981, 1988, 1991 and 1997). Australia represents a particularly well-suited scenario to observe the dynamics of CVs in multicultural settings as, to quote Smolicz again, contemporary Australia aims to be a "multicultural nation that shares a whole gamut of cultural values, is not monoethnic or monocultural, and does not harbor beliefs about descent from a common ancestry – either biological or cultural"⁷⁷ (1997: 181).

⁷⁶ For an introduction to humanistic sociology, see Znaniecki, F. (1968). *The Method of Sociology*. New York: OctagonBooks, and Znaniecki, F. (1969). *On Humanistic Sociology: Selected Papers*, edited and with an introduction by R. Bierstedt. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

⁷⁷ Although this view of Australia as a multicultural nation can still be accepted today, recent studies presented by Chiro, himself one of Smolicz' students, doubt that multiculturalism is still alive and well in Australia. See for instance Chiro, G. (2010). *The Rise and Fall of Multiculturalism in Australia: A Return to Integrationism?*. In A. J. Liddicoat and A. Scarino (eds) *Languages in Australian Education: Problems, Prospects and Future Directions*, 109–125. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

In a multicultural society shared values can either be offered by the host country, be brought in by migrants or evolve as the result of interaction among them; rather than their origin though, what matters is their acceptance in the community. According to Smolicz, Australia's shared values are mostly European and can be identified in parliamentary democracy as a political asset, economic pluralism and individual freedom (88-89).

Core Values and Italian identity in Australia

According to Smolicz, the most important CV for Italians is represented by *family ties*: in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon stress on individualism, “the Italian family ethos demonstrates an underlying stress on collectivism and the mutual interdependence of members” (1981: 75). The Italian language, on the other hand, is considered far less characterising for a series of reasons to do with Italian complex linguistic history. This, as I argue below, yields fundamental consequences for the migratory context: the relatively low relevance accorded to it makes Italian much more likely to be put aside when competing with another, dominant idiom, as in the Australian setting.

As Chiro and Smolicz (1998: 29) point out, however, in the Italian-Australian cultural system language is not as highly valued as other languages are by other groups because Italian in Australia lacks the support of other ethno-specific cultural values, such as religion; on the contrary, Greeks, Serbs and Ukrainians, for example, “can rely on the unswerving linguistic and social support of the Orthodox Church”.

The role of the Italian language in the personal cultural system of first and second generation Italians in Australia has been widely analysed by one of Smolicz’s students, Giancarlo Chiro. A 2004 study focusing on older first generation Italians living in Adelaide shows that the maintenance of Italian within the family only ranks fifth among participants’ cultural values. The first place, confirming Smolicz’s assumptions, is assigned to the maintenance of family unity (190)⁷⁸. As for second generations (Chiro & Smolicz 1993, 1994, 1998), their core-value scale is quite different from the one of first-generation Italians: while the relevance given to speaking Italian at home is similarly low, ranking eighth in participants’ assessment of their own cultural values (Chiro & Smolicz 1993: 321), knowledge and appreciation of Italy comes first, closely followed by maintaining family ties, while contributing to multicultural Australia is significantly third⁷⁹.

⁷⁸ Maintaining Italian clubs and associations ranks second, Italian food and cuisine third and conviviality/visiting friends and family fourth (Chiro 2004: 190).

⁷⁹ Italian hospitality is fourth, Italian folklore fifth, the availability of Italian media sixth and Caring for aged parents seventh (Chiro & Smolicz 1993: 321). For a further analysis of second generation Italian-Australian see also Chiro 2003.

2.3.2 The 'transnational' perspective

Concluding his essay on first-generation migrants in South Australia (2004: 190), Chiro argues that:

Through the interview process it was apparent that the participants strongly identify with their Italian heritage and cultural values and do not share the sense of living 'between two worlds' experienced by their second-generation counterparts.

Many migration scholars, however, particularly those who share a *transnational* approach to migration, have disputed the assumption that the "sense of living 'between two worlds'" only applies to second-generation individuals. The term 'transnationalism' became popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when several scholars in migration studies (see Schiller et al. 1992 and Basch et al. 1994), started developing the idea that migrants do not simply move from one country to another, rather "*transmigrants* take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them *simultaneously* to two or more nation-states (my emphasis)" (Basch et al. 1994: 8).

The choice itself of the term 'transmigrants' is worth commenting on: as the authors suggest (4), the term 'immigrant', evokes images of permanent rupture, of abandonment of the home country and of integration into a new culture. Moreover, while 'immigrant' is commonly understood as a person who 'came to stay', a 'migrant' is often considered as a worker who moved only temporarily and will eventually return home. 'Transmigrant' thus seems to be the right word to support the idea of, as they put it, "people with feet in two societies" (7).

According to transnational scholars, migrants⁸⁰ often build a stream of social, cultural and economic relationships that cross national borders and give life to an in-between space where migrants really feel at home. Typically, they feel that their real essence neither lies in being an adopted citizen of the host country, nor does it stay left behind in the deserted homeland: arguably, "it is during the act of visiting, of moving between places, between homes, that the emigrant feels most at home" (Baldassar 1997: 91).

The last quote, from the Italian-Australian anthropologist Loretta Baldassar introduces the concept of *return visits*, which, from a transnational view-point, have a crucial role in the shaping of migrants' identity. Baldassar, born in Perth of Italian parents, has widely explored Italian migration to Australia from a transnational perspective: she focused in particular on migrants who came to Western Australia from a small town in the Veneto region called San Fior⁸¹ (1997, 1999, 2001), producing an illuminating analysis of the dynamics emerging both in Australia and in Italy, both in those who left and in those who stayed. Some of these dynamics

⁸⁰ Throughout the thesis, I use the term 'migrant' without specific connotation and with no reference to the intended length of stay in the host country.

⁸¹ Nearly three hundred people migrated from San Fior to Australia during the 1920s and more significantly during the 1950s (Baldassar 1997: 74).

are typical of the Italian-Australian community and in Baldassar's works they are acutely interpreted: *campanilismo* and *sistemazione*, in particular, are pointed out as effective keys to understand some of these dynamics.

Campanilismo stems from the Italian word *campanile* 'bell tower' and refers to the proud sense of belonging that Italians feel towards their home town. It could be translated in English with 'parochialism', even though the Italian expression carries a much deeper meaning: the *campanile*, often the physically highest point of a town or suburb, is also its symbol and its soul. The sound of the bells, that particular and unique sound made by the bells of one's hometown, represents an inner call deeply rooted in the memory of many Italian migrants. When applied to a migratory context, the target of the 'campanilistic' feelings can shift: for a *San Fiorese* migrant in Western Australia, for example, it can be redirected towards the home town as a whole, as opposed to the native suburb, or even to the *San Fiorese* community in Perth (Baldassar 1997: 89).

As for *sistemazione*, this represents a certain economic security that allows the individual to 'settle down', get married and have children. As Baldassar points out, in Italy it is a "cultural requirement" and many migrants of the post-war era migrated in order to facilitate their eventual *sistemazione* back in their home town (78). The *sistemazione* is also something to boast about during return visits: expensive presents for all the extended family and friends were a must for visiting migrants, who had the opportunity to demonstrate the economic stability reached thanks to their choice to migrate.

The role of return visits in shaping migrants' identity is the real focus of Baldassar's studies (1997, 2001). For the first generation, return visits often become like pilgrimages to a shrine that the migrant needs to periodically access for cultural and spiritual renewal (1997: 89). For second generations, instead, they are configured as a *rite of passage*, of cultural transformation, a physical immersion in the land, the culture, the language and the food that their parents can only describe by word. Return visits are crucial, then, in building what Baldassar calls a transnational identity: the complicated web of social and cultural relations that develop out of regular visits, suggests that migrant "draw upon and create fluid and multiple identities grounded both in their old and in their new homeland" (87).

Return visits, however, can also have a bitter-sweet taste: Ruth Mandel (1990: 160), in her work on Turkish *Gastarbeiter*, brilliantly expresses these complex and sometimes painful dynamics:

They have returned home to drink the water, feel the sun, and breathe the air. They have come home to reaffirm their Turkishness, yet they find themselves unaccepted as "normal" Turks. They have become irrevocably marked by virtue of their extended absence from Turkey.

If, on the one hand, visiting home allows migrants to consolidate their relation with their home land, their family and friends and to reinforce their transnational identity, on the other, it can also mark the unfillable gap between those who left and those who stayed⁸².

2.3.3 The interactional approach

Another perspective for the study of migrants' identity which, for the last decade or so, has been gaining considerable popularity in the humanities and social sciences is the interactional approach. This is the approach that specifically informs my research, and for this reason, in Chapter I, I examined in detail the notion of interactional identity as well as the theoretical background that set the scene for its emergence. In this section, instead, I focus on those studies which applied the interactional approach to the specific field of Italian migration to Australia (Ciliberti 2007a; Paoletti and Cavalloro Johnson 2007; Pasquandrea 2008 and 2009; Rubino 2014a and 2014b) and, only cursorily, to the United States (De Fina 2003; 2006; 2007b; 2007c; Del Torto 2008).

The application of the interactional approach to the field of Italian migration is a fairly recent line of research and the literature on the topic is therefore still limited to only a few studies. The volume edited by Ciliberti (2007a) and the works of Pasquandrea (2008 and 2009), analyse video recordings of conversations among multigenerational families of Italian migrants in Australia and in the US. The volume edited by Ciliberti, focusing on Italian-Australian families, brings together different perspectives (Anderson 2007; Ciliberti 2007b; De Fina 2007a; Fellin 2007; Margutti 2007a and 2007b) and represents the first published study on the construction of interactional identity that includes papers based on the Italian-Australian setting. Among the patterns emerging from the video recordings, the authors highlight the interplay between identities in multigenerational families, such as the opposition between members of the first and of the second generation and that with Australian partners. Another opposition often performed is the one between participants and the Italian researchers, often seen as a point of reference for information about contemporary Italy (De Fina 2007a).

The works by Pasquandrea, in particular the book published in 2008 and based on his doctoral thesis, foreground the role of code-switching in the construction of migrants' identity. The research is based on the same data analysed in Ciliberti 2007 plus a similar corpus of video recordings carried out with Italian-American families. Accepting the notion of code-switching as described by Auer (1998), the author explores the relations between this phenomenon and the negotiation of interactional identities, drawing the conclusion that code-switching cannot be a

⁸² A study by O'Flaherty et al. (2007) argues, however, that transnational studies often inflate the prevalence of transnational ways of living: their survey on return visit patterns in several ethnic groups shows that the phenomenon is extremely various and the incidence and relevance of visiting home are often much smaller than what transnational scholars argue.

priori linked to pre-defined identities, rather, speakers choose their code based on local, context-related dynamics and functions.

After researching and publishing extensively on the sociolinguistic dynamics of the Italian-Australian community and, in particular, on the multilingualism of Sicilian-Australian families, Rubino recently turned her attention to the link between language and identity, particularly to Conversation Analysis and the performance of identity in interaction. Her recent book (2014a) explores the linguistic practices of a Sicilian-Australian family, focusing on the alternation between English, Italian and Sicilian and its reflection on the 'play-out' of identities. An article published in the same year (2014b) also shares the same theoretical background and setting, that is, multigenerational Sicilian-Australian families, and focuses on the conversational resolution of a conflict between a first-generation migrant and her son.

As mentioned above, Pasquandrea's work analysed data both from the Australian and the American context and his findings show that the conversational dynamics enacted by participants in the two settings are altogether similar in the two settings. The construction of identities in the Italian-American community has been widely analysed in the works of Anna De Fina: incorporating sociolinguistic data into a discourse analytic perspective, De Fina investigated in particular the role of linguistic features such as style (2007b) or code switching (2007c) in the construction of ethnic identity. She also devoted specific attention to the relevance of narratives in the construction of identities in immigrant discourse (2003; 2006; Baynham and De Fina 2005; Bamberg et al. 2007b).

Concluding remarks

In this Chapter I presented a contrastive analysis of past and contemporary migration flows from Italy to Australia; I stressed the innovative character of new Italian migration pointing out the need for further academic research specifically targeted to this phenomenon.

After discussing the main bibliographic sources on the language of Italian migrants in Australia I draw attention to the study of migrants' identity and presented three approaches to its study: the theory of Core Values, the Transnational and the Interactional approach. In conclusion of this chapter I would like to further clarify my position towards the three approaches discusses.

I pointed out the useful insights the theory of Core Values offers to different disciplines, and particularly when considered the historical context it grew out of. In the 1980s, Australia was proudly promoting its new multicultural asset, and ethnic minorities were starting to be studied: in this scenario, the theory proposed by Smolicz appeared as an effective tool to analyse and explain the differences between different ethnic groups. It is not, however, nor does it aim to be, a suitable approach to capture the multi-faceted and shifting identity of the single individual.

Moreover, as the following quote brilliantly expresses (Baldassar 1997: 89), the Core Value approach, as other non-transnational perspectives, tends to give too static an idea of cultural identity:

Studies of ethnic minorities that do not consider migration as 'transnational interaction' often produce an image of culture 'as a kind of package of attributes carried across from the homeland' (Bottomley 1992: 4). This reified view of culture can lead to the idea that culture is lost and/or watered down over the generations, or alternatively that migrants are 'frozen' in a kind of 'time warp', remaining enmeshed in the culture of their place of origin from the set time of their departure.

The perspective proposed by transnational scholars instead, and by Baldassar in particular, is indeed fascinating, and, I would argue, it is proving more and more effective as migration increasingly becomes a global phenomenon. Return visits are now more affordable thanks to cheaper airfares, but, in a certain sense, they have lost part of their significance: as I have noted earlier in this chapter, the Internet allows migrants to maintain their family relations and friendships in several ways, and it also offers constant and real-time availability of Italian media. Return visits are still fundamental milestones of the migration experience, but today migrants can sustain their 'trans-nationality' on a daily basis even from the host country.

Baldassar's approach proves to be clearly aware of the emotional distress as well as of the excitement linked to the experience of migration. Indeed, Baldassar's personal experience of being a second-generation Italian-Australian may have enabled her to penetrate the migrant's self so acutely. The notion of 'transnational identity', defined in her essay *Home and Away* (1997), stands out as a theoretical reference point for the study of migrants' identity that I carry out in the following chapters.

Transnationalism, however, is not exempt from criticism itself: the article by O'Flaherty et al. (2007) cited above, for example, opposes to traditional transnational studies a quantitative analysis of the return visits of migrants from different ethnic groups in Australia. The purpose of this survey is to demonstrate that transnationalism tends to create an illusion of universality by analysing mainly ethnographic studies of active transnational individuals. Although they recognise the central theoretical role played by transnationalism in migration studies today, they conclude that conceptualising it as a universal mode of existence for migrants is no longer possible.

Finally, one of the aims of this study is to establish whether transnationalism is a valid approach to the study of contemporary Italian migration to Australia; in particular, I look at the data to see if the construction and negotiation of interactional identities reveals the 'transnational' character of migrants' identities or, in other words, if the Transnational and the Interactional approaches can be seen as mutually enriching and complementary.

Chapter III

Methodology

In this chapter I discuss aspects related to the methodology I adopted for my research. I begin with an account of the methodological paradigms which most strongly influenced my work and of the methodological peculiarities that characterise my research differentiating it from other studies published in the field; I then discuss the choices I made with regards to data collection and analysis, focusing in particular on the selection and recruitment of participants, the process of recording, my role as participant observer, the transcription of selected passages and the principles I followed during the analysis of data.

3.1 Methodological paradigms and peculiarities of this study

Two main approaches inform the methodology I adopted for data collection and analysis, namely Ethnography and Conversation Analysis. Considering the nature of my research, Ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Atkinson et al. 2001) seemed to offer a valuable set of theoretical and methodological principles, such as participant observation, a focus on the perspective of social actors rather than on that of researchers, and a strong stance against 'preconceived ideas'.

As for this last aspect, which is probably the ethnographic principle that most strongly influenced my work, I fully embraced Malinowski's idea of 'foreshadowed problems'⁸³ (cited in Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 21): according to Malinowski, the role that theoretical studies should have for the qualitative researcher is not that of creating 'preconceived ideas', but theory should reveal to the researcher 'foreshadowed problems', that is, research questions that will only find an answer in fieldwork. In Malinowski's own words "the more problems he [the researcher] brings with him into the field, the more he is in the habit of moulding his theories according to facts, and of seeing facts in their bearing upon theory, the better he is equipped for the work" (ibid).

This principle seemed to be in line with the theoretical paradigms outlined in Chapter I, in particular with the idea of 'unmotivated looking' as a first step to data analysis promoted by the 'fathers' of CA, Sacks (1984) and Schegloff (1996). Sacks introduced the concept in his lectures suggesting that "treating some actual conversation in an unmotivated way [...] can have strong payoffs" (1984: 27); Schegloff describes it as "an examination not prompted by prespecified analytic goals [...] but by 'noticings' of initially unremarkable features of talk or of other conduct" (1996: 172); Psathas (cited in ten Have 2007: 120) also defined 'unmotivated

⁸³ Malinowski, B. (1922) *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 8-9.

looking' as an idea that implies that "the researcher is 'open' to discovering phenomena rather than searching for instances of already identified and described phenomena or for some theoretically preformulated conceptualization of what the phenomena should look like".

My study, however, is not a purely conversation analytic one, that is, it does not aim at analysing conversational structures in their own right, but, rather, at describing how such structures are used by interactants to achieve their goals and, in particular, to carry out identity work. For this reason, I approached the data with some sketched, open-ended research questions based on the theoretical background discussed in the first two chapters:

- What categories are made relevant by new migrants to construct their identities?
- Is the different socio-economic and linguistic profile of new migrants relevant in the identity work they carry out?
- How are interactional identities constructed and negotiated through talk?
- What conversational resources are deployed by interactants to do so?

As mentioned above, other ethnographic principles that I found particularly useful for my research are the focus on the perspective of social actors and the notion of participant observation: according to the ethnographic paradigm researchers should immerse themselves in the culture they propose to study and, ultimately, aim to see the world with the eyes of their informants/participants. This is why participant observation is essential to conduct fieldwork in keeping with ethnographic principles.

In this regard, however, my study is different from many other ethnographic works as, whereas ethnography began essentially as a way to study the *Other*, that is, cultures other than one's own and, at least initially, cultures other than the Western one (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 1), I proposed to investigate my own social group. Being a young Italian woman who has recently migrated to Australia, I share many membership categories with participants and this, I would argue, made data analysis considerably easier as well as more accurate and authentic, because both participants and I could rely on a shared understanding of linguistic, social and cultural ideologies (Bucholtz and Hall 2008). As Smolicz and Secombe argued (cited in Chiro 2003: 6), it is useful that investigators originate from the group that they propose to study and are familiar with its culture, because "this avoids the possible danger of oversimplifying [...] or the risk that researcher will impose their own group cultural values upon respondents".

In fact, I would add, for the type of study I carried out, the analysis of talk-in-interaction, being an 'insider' is often the only feasible option: as discussed in Chapter I, conversational conventions are culture- and language-specific and so also are conversational cues and the dynamics behind 'framing' (Goffman 1974). For these reasons, the fact that I was part of the same social group I intended to investigate contributed to minimising the risk of

misunderstandings that often occur in inter-cultural exchanges (see also Bucholtz and Hall 2004: 371).

As for the choice of the type of data on which to base the research, both methodological approaches, Conversation Analysis and Ethnography, pointed towards data arising from a 'natural' setting, rather than from experiments or structured interview. Conversation Analysis' stress on the importance of analysing 'natural' conversations was clear in Sacks' seminal works (Sacks 1984 and ten Have 2007: 68) and strictly linked to his interest on the mechanics and rules of everyday conversation. As for Ethnography's stance on the typology of data, the data I collected are somewhat hybrid. While Hammersley and Atkinson argue that ethnographic works usually study "people's actions and accounts [...] in everyday contexts, rather than under conditions created by the researcher" (2007:3), the interactions I recorded would probably fall into the latter category, as they consist in videorecorded conversations during dinner parties organised for the sole purpose of this research. For the reasons I outline in section 3.4 below, however, I believed this to be the closest available option to having data arising from a 'natural' setting.

This typology of data, audio or video recordings of dinner conversations, has a well-established tradition in the field of conversation and discourse analysis (Blum-Kulka 1997, Ciliberti 2007, Pasquandrea 2009); however, I consider the data collection I carried out to be, under certain aspects, unique. Firstly, as discussed above, my status as a new Italian migrant in Australia entails that I am myself part of the social group I intended to study, whereas works such as the ones by Ciliberti and Pasquandrea involved a researcher who arrived, from Italy in this case, for the sole purpose of the recordings. Secondly, while the analysis of dinner conversations is an established tradition in conversation analysis, to my knowledge, no other study applied this methodology of data collection exactly the way I did: most other works that analyse dinner conversations are set in a family environment, with the researcher taking part in the event as a guest. For my project, instead, I inverted the roles, inviting people to my house, with my partner and me acting as hosts and with participants being friends, acquaintances or even friends of friends, rather than family members. Moreover, being able to collect my own data and being the only person managing the project at all times, I had total freedom in the organisation of the recordings and, as I discuss in the sections below, in the management of the many variables at play.

3.2 Recruitment of participants

I started looking for participants in March 2011 and recruitment remained an ongoing process until the end of data collection in April 2012. As for the requirements applied during recruitment, the only one I considered essential was the duration of the person's stay in Australia: I only recruited individuals who had been in Australia for a minimum of two and a maximum of ten years. The reason why I established the upper limit of ten years is that, for the sake of the present work, I was only interested in the most recent stream of migration, the one that took place after 2000, to choose a symbolic milestone (Baldassar and Pyke 2014); in fact, as it turned out, almost all participants arrived in Australia after 2008 (see Table 9), which makes the sample even more interesting, as it reflects the increasingly significant post-GFC wave of migration.

The reasons for the lower threshold of two years, instead, are multiple. Firstly, this is what an Italian can stay up to with an Australian Working Holiday (WH) visa. As I discussed in chapter II, in the last five years or so, the WH visa has become a very popular choice among young Italians, not only for those who are just looking for a short-term stay, but also for people who intend to eventually migrate permanently to Australia. Since I did not intend to include the former in this research but, on the other hand, I did not want to exclude the latter, I decided to perform recruiting regardless of visa status. For this reason I was open to the option of involving in the study people on a second WH visa who were in the process of applying for a permanent visa, even though eventually only one participant falls into this category (Serena; see Table 9 below). Secondly, after two years in a foreign country, migrants are more likely to have developed a more complex 'system' of identities and attitudes towards both their home- and their host-countries.

I recruited participants through my personal social network, relying on a snow-ball effect to reach the desired number of fifteen-twenty people. I believed a sample of this size to be suitable for the kind of qualitative micro-analysis that I intended to carry out as it provides enough variety without the risk of collecting too large a corpus. I made first contact with participants personally, via e-mail or Facebook. This type of recruitment is particularly significant and representative of the phenomenon that I analysed, that is contemporary Italian migration: as I discussed in Chapter II and as the increasingly booming literature on the topic demonstrates (Baldassar and Pyke 2014), e-mails and social networks are the main means through which migrants keep in touch not only with each other, but also with their family and friends back home.

From the beginning, I intended to use video recordings to collect data and asked participants if they had any objection to being video recorded. Although I thought video could be quite intimidating for potential participants, they all responded enthusiastically to my invite,

most of them showing a genuine interest in the research and its possible outcomes. Only one of them initially refused to participate due to the fact that he did not like the idea of being video recorded, but he eventually changed his mind and asked to be part of the project.

After I made the first contact with potential participants and they expressed their willingness to take part in the research, I asked them to read and sign an Information form and a Participant Consent form (see Appendix 1)⁸⁴. In the Participant Consent form I asked for the availability to take part in one or two recording sessions. In the information form, I described the study as focussing on the interaction between language and identity; interestingly, although I did not mention the Italian language in particular, several instances in the recordings seem to suggest that participants perceived the study in which they were taking part as something inherently 'Italian'. During one dinner, for example, a participant apologised to another, a non-Italian speaker, for his use of Italian by saying that he was speaking Italian 'for the sake of the research'. On another occasion, this same non-Italian-speaking participant, during a dinner which was carried out mainly in English, asked me about my 'Italian study' and how it was going to turn out (see extract 11a in Chapter IV).

3.2.1 Composition of the sample

Although I endeavoured to incorporate as much variety as possible in the sample of participants, it did not aim to be representative of the whole community of new Italian migrants in Australia. The specific focus of the present research, a micro-analysis of identity performance in conversation, makes the study relevant regardless of broader social identities such as gender, age or education level, therefore these were not factors I considered when recruiting participants.

Eighteen people, including non-Italian partners, took part in this research. Fourteen are Italian migrants that migrated to Australia either as singles or as couples, and four are non-Italian partners. All non-Italian partners but one are Australian⁸⁵. Out of the fourteen Italian participants, nine are men and five are women; the total sample of eighteen is made up of eleven men and seven women. The slight imbalance in participants' gender is an effect of the absence of single Italian girls in the sample: the only singles who took part in the project are three men. Two Italian women participated with their Australian partners; a third woman is married to an Australian man, but he did not take part in the research. Two Italian men participated with their non-Italian partners, one of whom is Australian. Two Italian couples also form part of the sample; moreover, my partner, Fabio, should also be added to this last

⁸⁴ Ethical approval for this project has been granted from the University of Western Australia Human Ethics committee.

⁸⁵ Ernesto's partner, Bianca, is from Switzerland.

category. Although this imbalance in participants' gender was not a deliberate choice, I believe it did not affect the results in any way.

As for visa status, most participants held a permanent visa at the time of recording. Four of them already had Australian citizenship⁸⁶. Two had applied for permanent residency and two had already been granted it. My partner and I, together with another participant held a temporary residency visa (subclass 457). One participant held a bridging visa as she was transitioning from a WH Visa (subclass 417) to a De facto/Spouse Visa. Interestingly enough, none of the participants arrived in Australia with an employer sponsoring them (visa subclass 457), whereas the great majority of them entered the country either with a Visitor or a WH Visa. This composition, once again, reflects a widespread trend in contemporary Italian migration to Australia, as discussed in Chapter II.

As for participants' occupation and level of education, all but one held at least a university degree. One of them was enrolled in a PhD at the time of recording and three of them had already been awarded one. All but three⁸⁷ held professional positions; one worked in a trade. From the educational point of view the sample is certainly heavier on the 'over-educated' side and this is due to the fact that I started looking for participants in my own network of friends, mostly in the university environment. However, as for other variables discussed above, the sample reflects, maybe in a slightly emphasized way, a more general trend in contemporary migration: new migrants tend to be highly educated, in stark contrast to prior waves of Italian migration to Australia (Baldassar and Pyke 2014).

Coming to participants' geographic origin, the great majority of them are from northern Italy (six from Lombardy, three from Veneto and one from Liguria), two are from the Lazio region in central Italy and two are from the Campania region, in the South. As discussed in Chapter II, this reflects a general trend in contemporary Italian migration.

The following table summarises some basic personal information about the 14 Italian participants (non-Italian partners excluded).

⁸⁶ Roberto represents a unicum in the sample because his mother has Australian origins; therefore he already had an Australian passport when he first migrated to Australia.

⁸⁷ This number includes the one participant in the trades and two participants who had just finished their PhD and were looking for a job.

Table 9: Personal information about participants⁸⁸

	Age	Year of Arrival	Visa held on arrival	Current visa	Qualification/position	Relationship status
Amanda	32	2007	WH	Aus Citizen	MEc	Italian partner (Davide)
Antonio	30	2008	457	<i>Aus PR⁸⁹</i>	MSc	<i>Non-Australian partner</i>
Cesare	25	2009	Tourist	Aus PR	MEc	Italian partner (Valeria)
Davide	35	2006	WH	Aus Citizen	MSc	Italian partner (Amanda)
Ernesto	35	2003	Tourist	Aus Citizen	PhD	Non-Australian partner (Bianca)
Fabio	28	2009	WH	'457'	MSc	Italian partner (researcher)
Fernando	33	2009	Student	Student	PhD	Single
Giada	30	2008	WH	<i>Aus PR</i>	MSc	<i>Australian partner</i>
Ivo	41	2009	Student	Aus PR	PhD	Australian partner (Hannah)
Martina	34	2008	Student	Student	PhD	Australian partner (Angus)
Roberto	38	2008	Citizen	Aus Citizen	MA	Single
Serena	27	2009	WH	WH/Spouse	MSc	Australian partner (Darren)
Valeria	25	2009	Tourist	Aus PR	BEc	Italian partner (Cesare)
Vito	30	2008		'457'	Trade	Single

As for the reasons for migration, only one woman came to Australia following an Australian partner; all other participants migrated, either as singles or with a partner, to find better employment opportunity, to pursue a higher education degree or simply to escape a situation where they could not see any personal and professional potential for them and their future families. This is obviously the result of the deteriorating economic situation in Italy in the last decade or so, and something that, sadly, makes contemporary migration flows more similar to the post-war ones, as opposed to 'lifestyle migration' of the 1990s (Baldassar and Pyke 2014; Rubino 2009a and 2009b). I believe this aspect to be particularly representative of contemporary Italian migration to Australia, therefore, in the section below, I analyse participants' reasons to

⁸⁸ This information was gathered through a brief questionnaire submitted to participants through e-mail or Facebook. Pseudonyms are used, except for my partner Fabio, to maintain participants' anonymity.

⁸⁹ Italicised because participant had applied for permanent residency but had not yet been granted it.

migrate in more depth, incorporating in the discussion some extracts from the recordings in which participants narrate their own migration experiences.

Migration narratives were, as expected, a common topic of discussion among participants, especially when they met at the dinner for the first time⁹⁰. Narratives have several aspects in common: for instance, participants share the same disillusion about Italy and its economic situation and about the opportunity offered to young people by the Italian job market. In particular, as the following extracts exemplify, participants complained about the inadequate and sometimes even humiliating salaries they received from their Italian employers. In Ivo's narrative, for example, he mentions that after finishing a PhD he could only find an underpaid job as a dishwasher⁹¹:

(1) Ivo

(D3)

I: ho fatto il dottorato in italia
poi ho passato tre anni
a lavare i piatti a sei euro l'ora
poi ho detto ma adesso andiamo a fà un giro va

*i did my phd in italy
then i spent three years
washing dishes for six euros per hour
then i said well now let's go somewhere else*

Similarly, in the following extract, Davide, after narrating his own move to Australia, tells the others about the humiliating salary Amanda, his partner, was earning in Italy:

(2) Davide and Amanda

(D1: Amanda & Davide, Fabio & Researcher)

D: poi sono stato un anno e mezzo in italia ((after
graduating))
e non mi piaceva l'andazzo
Am: dai raccontaci la tua storia davide
non ti piaceva l'andazzo
D: non mi piaceva l'andazzo e me ne sono andato
e me ne sono venuto qua in australia

⁹⁰ Given that, particularly in the following analytic chapters, I often refer to the concept of narrative and to its role in identity construction, it seems worthwhile to clarify my stance towards the different possible approaches to narrative analysis. As Georgakopoulou illustrates (2011), the study of narratives, that is, accounts of past events and life experiences, can be divided into two main approaches: a more conventional, 'structuralistic' one inspired by the work of Labov and Waletzky (1967) and, in more recent years, one inspired by the interactional view of social reality and sense making (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008). In line with the theoretical principles discussed in Chapter 1, I believe the latter approach to be more suitable to my analysis and I therefore consider narratives as 'conversational strategies' closely embedded in the local context of the interaction (Georgakopoulou 2011: 398-399).

⁹¹ For the extracts in this section I used a basic transcription instead of a conversation analytic one because the main focus here is on the content of the extracts rather than on the details of the interaction.

Re: da solo
 Am: da solo
 D: ho fatto dei lavori del cavolo
 poi dopo otto mesi questi mi hanno preso @
 Re: ah
 D: ho lavorato per un anno con loro a brisbane
 poi mi hanno chiesto di spostarmi qua
 (.)
 D: poi un anno dopo sono tornato
 ed è venuta pure lei
 (.)
 lei stava lavorando
 Am: shut up
 D: per tre
 Am: shut up
 D: per tre euro all'ora @
 Am: [basta con questa storia
 Re: [in italia
 D: ho detto senti se devi lavorare per tre euro a-
 F: beh ma è già buona che ti pagavano
 Re: @
 F: visto l'andazzo
 Am: oh:
 D: fabio
 F: conosco gente che pagava per andare al lavoro
 D: le ho detto senti amanda te li do io
 ((general laughter))
 D: non tre euro te ne do quattro e vienitene va'

D: then i stayed in italy for a year and a half
D: and i didn't like how things were going
Am: c'mon tell us your story davide
you didn't like how things were going
D: i din't like how things were going and i went away
and i came here in australia
Re: alone
Am: alone
D: i did some crappy jobs
then after eight months these guys hired me @
Re: ah
D: i worked for a year with them in brisbane
then they asked me to move here
 (.)
D: then a year later i went back
and she came along too
 (.)
she was working
 Am: shut up
 D: for three
 Am: shut up
 D: for three euros per hour @
 Am: [enough with this story
 Re: [in italy
 D: i said listen if you have to work for three euros p-
 F: well it's lucky they paid her
 Re: @

F: *considering how things are going*
 Am: *oh:*
 D: *fabio*
 F: *i know people who payed to go to work*
 D: *i told her listen i'll pay you*
((general laughter))
 D: *not three euros i'll give you four you come with me*

During another dinner, Davide provided another version of his migration narrative, this time focusing on other aspects of his decision to move to Australia. Rather than on the reasons that pushed him to leave Italy, he now recounts the steps he took to put his plan into action:

(3) Davide

D: io me ne volevo andare me ne volevo andare
 o in america o da qualche altra parte
 poi ho fatto:
 poi un amico mi disse
 ah guarda in australia c'è il working holiday visa
 ti fanno stare lì per un anno a lavorare
 ho detto wo:w perfetto
 mi sono informato poi ho visto
 avevo visto pure che comunque in australia
 il costo della vita era abbastanza basso rispetto
 F: ahah hai cambiato idea però poi@
 D: ho detto ah: poi c'ho pure dei parenti quindi
 Am: te lo ricordi tuo cugino
 da quanto tempo non la senti la cugina australiana
 dai dai chiamala un po'
 ripristina i contatti
 e si è presentato
 D: e quindi
 gli ho mandato una mia fotografia
 per farmi riconoscere all'aeroporto eh: @
 mi sono presentato

D: *i wanted to go*
i wanted to go to america or somewhere else
then i did:
then a friend told me
oh look in australia there's the working holiday visa
they let you stay there for a year to work
i said wo:w perfect
i looked for information
then i saw i also saw that anyway in australia
the cost of life was pretty low compared
 F: *ahah but you changed your mind afterwards@*
 D: *i said oh: then i even got some relatives so*
 Am: *you remember your cousin*
when did you last hear from your australian cousin
c'mon c'mon give her a call
get back in touch
and he came here
 D: *and so*

*i sent them a photo of me
so that they could recognise me at the airport eh: @
i came here*

Davide's story is, I believe, representative of the experience of many other new migrants: the desire to leave Italy to seek a better lifestyle and a happier future for their families, the first contact with Australia 'by word of mouth', the opportunity to apply for a Working Holiday visa as the factor that pushed him towards his final decision to move to Australia and the role of old migrants, be it relatives, friends or friends of friends, as a 'safety net' for newly arrived Italians (Baldassar et Pyke 2014). As for this last aspect, whereas it is true that new migrants often leave Italy with at least a phone number or address of someone who has settled here in Australia, it is also true that this liaison between old and new migrants is often short lived and, once in Australia, new migrants often prefer to socialise and build support networks with other new migrants (see section 2.1.2.2 in Chapter II)

3.3 Data collection

The data presented in this dissertation consist of video recordings of spontaneous conversations during dinner parties. The corpus consists of a total of about twenty hours of recorded conversations. The choice of having dinners rather than other kinds of gatherings was made on the basis of several factors. Firstly, dinners seemed the most appropriate setting to promote spontaneous conversation, especially among people meeting for the first time. Other settings were considered (cafés, Sunday afternoon meetings, etc.) but none of them seemed to offer the same advantages of dinner parties organised at home: a versatile space to place recording devices and a casual environment in which people could engage in spontaneous conversations for hours at a time. As Blum-Kulka points out (1997: 16), dinners also offer the advantage of creating "spontaneous spatiotemporal boundaries, so that talk is framed externally by the nature of the activity type, and the framing is not imposed by the researcher".

Secondly, food and its rituals occupy a special place in the scale of Italian Core Values (See Chapter II, section 2.3.1): while for other ethnic groups it may be unnatural to sit around a table for hours, it is certainly not so for Italians, who value the convivial aspect of food as much as the gastronomic one (Ciliberti 2007).

Thirdly, as I mentioned above, the study of dinner talk has a significant tradition in the fields of discourse analysis and CA: *Dinner Talk* (Blum-Kulka 1997), the pioneering seminal work on the topic, analyses the conversations of Israeli and Jewish American families at dinnertime, thus looking at discourse analysis as a way to explore cultural differences. More closely related to the topic of the present research, the collection edited by Ciliberti (2007) and the book by Pasquandrea (2008) also analyse conversations during convivial meetings among

multigenerational families of Italian migrants. As noted above, however, the kind of conversational event I created for my study differs from the ones analysed in the abovementioned works inasmuch as I organised dinner parties among friends, or sometimes strangers rather than among family members.

I organised six dinners in total, over a period of roughly twelve months. Dinners took place, all but one, at my house. As I did for recruitment, I mostly organised the dinners through e-mails or Facebook messages.

I decided to organise two dinners which would serve as pilot studies (Maxwell 2009) to test the equipment, confirm the methodology and choose the most effective directions to take for the remaining of the recordings⁹². Results from these pilot studies were very encouraging and they served well the purpose of guiding me in gauging the organisation of the remaining dinners. One of the two dinners, for instance, involved only Italian speakers, whereas the other involved also non-Italian speakers: after a preliminary analysis of these data, I realised that the latter presented much more interesting features, not only from a linguistic point of view, but, more importantly, also from the perspective of the identity work done by participants. On the one hand, the presence of non-Italian people at the table elicited the performance of more varied facets of personal identities (Italian vs non-Italian, Italian vs Australian); on the other, the switching between English and Italian produced some very interesting results in terms of the connection between language and identity.

The analysis of these pilot studies was also useful to evaluate the effect of other variables, such as the number of participants: one dinner only involved four people, including myself⁹³, whereas the other was initially planned for six people but then saw the arrival of another two people towards the end of it⁹⁴, making a total of eight people for the final part of the recordings. The dinner with four participants had very easy to follow conversations, with only one speaker speaking at a time; however, in quantitative terms, it seemed to provide much less material, as conversation was slower, less words were uttered and there was more pausing. The recordings of the dinner with six participants were also easy to follow, with only one speaker holding the turn most of the times; it also had a slightly faster pace, with most of the turns unfolding without pauses. The situation changed quite dramatically when the other two people arrived. With eight speakers, multiple parallel streams of conversation developed almost instantly and the recorded conversations became, at times, impossible to follow.

⁹² I refer here in particular to the choice of the variables to take into consideration when planning a dinner, e.g. number of people, relationship status of the people invited and language spoken by them, etc.

⁹³ I was planning to have a total of six people for this dinner, but two people (a couple) had to cancel as she was admitted to hospital on that day.

⁹⁴ This is the only dinner that was not held at my house, therefore my agency on the number of people involved was somewhat limited.

Finally, I took the opportunity presented by these pilot studies to evaluate the positives and the negatives of video rather than audio recording. I intended to use video recordings for my project, but wanted to verify whether the video camera would have too strong an impact on participants' ease. Therefore I recorded the first dinner with a voice recorder plus an external microphone, and the second with a video camera plus external microphone. The audio quality was excellent in both cases but the access to images constituted an undeniable advantage during transcription and analysis of data. As for the effects of the video camera on participants, they obviously showed awareness of being video recorded and often referred to the presence of the camera; using a voice recorder, however, produced very similar results and I did not notice any significant difference in participants feeling more or less at ease in one situation rather than the other.

Therefore, in the light of the analysis of the two pilot studies, I concluded that for the remainder of data collection I would observe, when possible, the following parameters:

- Organise dinners with at least one non-Italian speaker
- Aim for an ideal number of six participants per dinner, including myself
- Choose video rather than audio recording

In the next section I discuss in more detail the choice of using video data.

3.3.1 The choice of video recordings

Choosing video recordings has undeniable advantages when it comes to transcribing data. As ten Have pointed out (2007: 72) and as my own experience confirmed, having access to the images and not just to the spoken words can be fundamental when dealing with conversations that involve several speakers. Traditional conversation analytic studies not only were made in an era when video recordings would have been less feasible due to the nature of available technology, but, more importantly, mostly involved conversations among two speakers only, the great majority of data being composed of recorded phone calls. In settings such as the one I analysed, having access to the video is sometimes the only way to disambiguate who is speaking to whom. Images can also serve as a substitute for field notes, as they store important information that would otherwise need to be recorded by hand: when and where the recording took place, who attended the event, anyone who temporarily left the room and, for dinners in particular, who was sitting next to whom etc.

The advantages of videos, however, are not limited to the practical ones I have discussed so far. Dealing with videos also allows the researcher to have access to much more information than just spoken words: gaze direction, hand gestures and body movements are among the elements that having only audio recordings prevents access to. Paul ten Have (2007: 72) refers

to conversation analysts working on video recordings as the 'video branch of conversation analysis', that is, to cite just a few, Charles and Marjorie Harness Goodwin and Christian Heath (Heath 2004). ten Have (2007: 8) also points out that the availability of video recording did not in fact substitute audio recording, rather, it seems to be used mostly in a "complementary fashion to audio-based CA".

When describing the recruitment process above, I mentioned my initial fear about the video recording being too off-putting for potential participants and how instead they responded enthusiastically to my invitation. Similarly, in the section above I argued that after carrying out the pilot studies, I observed how the use of the video camera rather than that of a voice recorder did not significantly affect participants' ease. This was confirmed in the following dinners by several factors: the topics discussed, often on the brink of 'inappropriateness'⁹⁵, the register of language used, informal and often even colloquial, and the general feeling of the meetings, casual and relaxed. This is obviously not to say that the presence of the video recorder did not affect the data collected. I am well aware of the impossibility to collect 'natural data' in a setting such as the one of the present research, not only for the presence of the recorder itself, but also for my own role during the dinner, which I discuss in more detail in the next section. Participants themselves often referred to the video camera, either to ask me whether it was already or still on, or, speaking directly to the recorder, to apologise for their use of swear words. Someone jokingly referred to the camera as 'Big Brother'. Overall, however, evaluating the positives and the negatives of this methodology, I consider the use of video recording in this project to have been very successful.

3.3.2 My role as participant observer

As I mentioned above, I consider my role as participant observer during the dinners one of the strengths and peculiarities of my research, not only because I invited participants at my house, I cooked the food we ate and I sat down at the table with them, but, more importantly, because, sharing with participants the same linguistic and socio-demographic profile, I could analyse data from the privileged perspective of an insider. Moreover, many of the people involved were already friends or acquaintances of mine, which made it easier for me to take part in the dinners not only as researcher but also as peer or even as friend. I believe this helped creating the casual and informal environment I was aiming at. Although as participant observer I believe I blended in well with other participants, however, I am aware of the 'observer's paradox' (Labov 1972) and

⁹⁵ Blum-Kulka (1997: 18) mentions instead that the presence of the recorder and that of the observer may have influenced the topic selection during the dinners she analysed, as she noted that certain topics such as money, sex or politics never arose in conversation. The difference in the typology of dinner recorded, everyday family dinners *versus* dinner parties among friends may account for this discrepancy, as topics are more easily controlled and selected in a family environment rather than in a group of acquaintances or friends.

of the impossibility of collecting 'natural', 'objective' data through this kind of methodology (Blum-Kulka 1997: 17).

From an interactional point of view, my role during the dinners is indeed fascinating, as I was, at the same time, host, researcher, cook, peer and friend, just to name a few of my situational identities. All these identities were made relevant by participants at different stages during recordings. The identity of researcher was certainly among the ones projected on me more often, as people frequently asked information about the project and, in particular, for those participants who took part in two dinners, about the outcomes of the first session of recordings.

As a participant observer, during the dinners I did not impose, suggest or direct the topic of conversation in any way. Not surprisingly, however, given the context of migration, some topics, such as narratives about participants' migration to Australia or talk about visas and other bureaucratic encumbrances, spontaneously recurred several times during the dinners. So did what I shall call 'migrant talk', that is, talk about life in Australia, about the things migrants miss about Italy and the ones they love about Australia. Language was also a common topic of discussion, with participants often spontaneously commenting on their use of the varieties in their linguistic repertoire (see extract 1 in Chapter VI).

During the process of transcription and data analysis, which I describe in the next sections, I treated my own words as part of the material to be analysed. This seemed from the beginning the only reasonable option since, as Ciliberti pointed out (2007b), the words of the researcher, just like the ones of other interactants, play an essential role in the sequencing of the interaction. Other approaches, such as ignoring my words during data analysis, were just not appropriate for the kind of study I intended to carry out.

3.4 Transcription and analysis of data

I have grouped the processes of transcription and data analysis under the same section because, as the literature in the field suggests (Psathas and Anderson 1990: 77) and as my own experience as a transcriber confirmed, transcription should be considered the first, fundamental step of data analysis, rather than a preliminary step separated from the analytic work.

3.4.1 Transcription conventions

Although no transcription can be considered 'neutral' and 'objective' (Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Psathas and Anderson 1990: 90-91; Edwards and Lampert 1993; Bucholtz 2000), as it remains an 'interpretation' of the interaction, providing an accurate, detailed yet readable transcription is certainly a critical step in studies that analyse interaction. Different branches of interaction analysis, such as CA, discourse analysis or interactional sociolinguistics, have different

transcription conventions to suit their needs and specific interests. I considered the CA transcript conventions established by Jefferson to be the most appropriate for presenting the extracts analysed in the next three chapters (Jefferson 2004). Not only do they allow for much flexibility in the degree of detail provided, they are also the most commonly used in works that analyse interaction, which makes them easily understandable by a competent reader⁹⁶(see Appendix 3).

3.4.2 Transcription process

After consulting the literature on the topic (ten Have 2007: 112; Zanettin 2007), I decided to use a software programme for data analysis and transcription. I chose *Transana*⁹⁷, developed at the Wisconsin Centre for Education Research, not only because it is open source, but also because it seemed to be particularly suited to the kind of analysis I proposed to carry out (Zanettin 2007). It offers a wide array of options which can be very useful for the contemporary qualitative researcher: among others, ease of data management and organisation, facilitated video or audio re-play and transcription and possibility to create collections and to search the corpus by keywords. Among the features I appreciated most of the *Transana* software, there is, firstly, the fact that it offers the possibility to play the video, have the sound wave, the script and the analyst's comments all in the same window; secondly, it also allows you to link a section of video to one or more scripts or comment sheets through time codes embedded in the text; finally, there is the option to create clips and group them in collections organised by themes or keywords. All these features really helped making the transcription and analysis process more manageable.

Having collected quite a large corpus of data (about twenty hours of conversation) I organised the process of transcription and analysis into different stages, which I describe here in detail as I believe it helps to understand how the final data analysis presented in the next three chapters came into shape. Moreover, whereas I discuss data analysis more specifically in section 3.4.4, some aspects of the analysis are mentioned here as the two processes overlapped several times and were deeply intertwined both chronologically and epistemologically.

Firstly, immediately after recording each dinner party, I transferred the video from the recorder to my computer and uploaded it to the *Transana* software; I then watched the video a first time taking notes and making comments about the passages that seemed to be potentially interesting. At this stage, I created different comment sheets for each video, each with comments on different aspects, for example identity work or linguistic features such as transference or code switching. After doing this for all the dinners recorded, I could see some

⁹⁶ See appendix 3 for an overview of transcript notations used in this work.

⁹⁷ I used *Transana* 2.42b (2010) although improved versions of the software became available in subsequent years. Development and update of the software is led by David Woods at the above-mentioned Wisconsin centre.

general trends or features begin to emerge (see section 3.4.4), so I went back to the passages I had highlighted as potentially interesting to have a closer look. This is when I first started transcribing: having confirmed the points of interest of a single passage, I made a rough transcription of the conversation so that I could start looking at the finer details of the interaction (ten Have 2007: 110-111). When I eventually established the exact point of the conversation I was interested in, I converted the rough initial transcription into a more detailed one. The main principle that guided me through this process was the ‘no tidying up’ rule (Heritage and Atkinson 1984): whereas for other disciplines that work on recorded data it may be acceptable for the transcriber to “clean up the mess a bit” (ten Have 2007: 94) or ‘tidy up’ all non-essential words or sounds for the sake of making the transcript more accessible, conversation analysts should aim at reporting *everything* that was said, also providing as much detail as possible about *how* the speech was delivered (ibid.). This proved sometimes particularly challenging, since the data I worked on consist of recordings of gatherings with at least four people present, with frequent overlapping speech, parallel conversations and asides. However, I believe the result to be well worth the effort, as I experienced first hand several times how much insight into the subtleties of interaction a well done transcription can provide.

3.4.3 Translation

Since most of the recordings were in Italian or in a mix of English and Italian, after deciding which extracts I was going to present in the final discussion of data analysis, I went on to translate these passages into English. It is worth noting that in a study such as this one the original has the absolute priority over the translation and the latter is presented for the only purpose of providing the non-Italian speaking reader with an idea of the content of the interaction. For this reason, while transcribing the extracts, I aimed at preserving the *meaning* of the turns over the *literal form*. Of the different options available for providing the translation (line by line, in appendix etc.; ten Have 2007: 109-110) I chose to present each translated extract right below the original as I considered this format more reader friendly.

3.4.4 Data analysis

Embracing the ethnographic principle of ‘foreshadowed problems’ and the conversation analytic one of ‘unmotivated looking’, I started data analysis without a priori ideas about which identity categories I intended to focus on. The starting point when I began data analysis was an interest in identity work, or identity performance in interaction. Given the migratory context, some categories were more likely to be deployed in conversation than others (e.g. ethnic identity), however I was open to discuss whatever the analysis of data brought up. Following the steps I outlined in the section above, out of the whole corpus of data, I started transcribing the

passages I considered potentially interesting from the point of view of interactional identity. After a more detailed analysis of selected interactions, and after I identified the main recurring patterns, I was eventually able to group the extracts into three groups, which are reflected in the three-fold structure of the data analysis presented in the following chapters⁹⁸. Whereas, as anticipated, identity performances relating to ethnicity were quite frequent, data also made relevant categories which I did not expect to see having such a predominant role: for example, the different 'local' identities 'played out' by Italians coming from different Italian regions (see Chapter VI).

After having highlighted the three main topics of analysis, that is, the Italian-Australian opposition, the new migrant-old migrant opposition and the performance of Italian regional and sub-regional identities, I went on to analyse the finest details of each interaction selected. My main focus was the identity work carried out by participants and I based my analysis on the theoretical background discussed in Chapter I. Particularly effective for the understanding of identity work was the analysis of participants' footings and positionings (see section 1.2.4), and the linguistic and paralinguistic means through which they were achieved.

Another useful tool to investigate identity construction in interaction is the distinction proposed by Zimmerman (1998) between *discourse*, *situational* and *transportable* identities. *Discourse* identities are similar in nature to Goffman's footings as they are indissolubly linked to the "moment-by-moment organisation of the interaction" (90) and include that of 'speaker', 'listener', questioner' etc.; *situational* identities, instead, "come into play within the precincts of particular types of situations" (ibid.) and, in the case of this work, include for example those of 'researcher' and 'participant'; finally, *transportable* identities are those that "travel with individuals across situations" (ibid.) and refer to broader social categories such as gender, age or ethnicity.

Finally, the analytic apparatus offered by CA provided an invaluable set of tools to look at identity work through the analysis of sequencing, turn taking, repairs and other conversational structures.

⁹⁸ The options offered by the Transana software were very helpful at this stage of the analysis, as I was able to create clips and organise them in collections according to topic, linguistic features or keywords.

PART II

Data analysis

After discussing the field of research and the theoretical and methodological apparatus in the first three chapters, I will now step into the analytical section of the thesis. As mentioned in Chapter III, I have divided the extracts selected for analysis into three groups, reflecting the three main dichotomies between identity categories made relevant by participants during the interactions. Moving from a broader to a more specific perspective, I analyse the opposition between the Italian and Australian ethnic identities in Chapter IV, the one between old and new Italian migrants in Australia in Chapter V and the one between the different Italian regional identities in Chapter VI.

Each chapter is divided into two main sections: in the first part of each chapter I discuss a specific aspect of the topic which emerged from the analysis as particularly relevant and therefore deserves attention in its own right. These sections (4.1, 5.1 and 6.1) are informed by a more discourse – as opposed to conversation - analytic approach; they tackle more general conversational dynamics and analyse broader social identities, and, although they still refer to identity construction in interaction, in these sections identities are often ‘talked about’, rather than ‘acted out’.

Sections 4.2, 5.2 and 6.2, instead, represent a more technical, conversation analytic discussion of the performance and negotiation of identity in interaction, the conversational, linguistic and paralinguistic strategies deployed by interactants to construct their own and others’ identities and the categorisations made relevant in this process. Quoting De Fina (2014), whereas sections 4.1, 5.1 and 6.1, deal more with ‘enregistered’ identities sections 4.2, 5.2 and 6.2, have ‘emergent’ identities as primary focus. Boundaries between the two sections, however, are fluid and often blurred.

Chapter IV

Negotiating ethnic identity at the table: *homo australis* and the Italian vs Australian opposition

In this chapter I discuss one of the patterns most frequently enacted by participants during interactions, that is, the opposition between the Italian and the Australian ethnic identities. While introducing the topic, it is important to note that, in line with the theoretical principles outlined in Chapter I, I consider ethnic identity not as an inherent attribute of individuals but as a product of social interaction, constantly subject to reassessment and negotiation (Rampton 1995; De Cillia et al. 1999; Bucholtz 1999b, 2004; De Fina 2007b and 2007c). Borrowing De Fina's words (2007c: 373), it can be argued that "there are no unified criteria that can universally define ethnic boundaries; rather, these are creatively invoked and negotiated by individuals and groups in response to their evolving social roles and circumstances".

The relevance of the opposition between ethnic identities established by participants comes as no surprise, as one can reasonably expect to encounter this contraposition in migrant discourse: the status of migrant can easily elicit contrasting attitudes towards the host country and its people and, at the same time, it modifies the person's dispositions and feelings towards their home-country (De Fina 2007c). The data analysed here offer numerous instances of talk related to the Italian-Australian contraposition and the ground on which ethnicity is negotiated varies considerably: quoting De Fina again, "any aspect of social reality, from food to accent, can be used to symbolically index ethnic affiliation" (Ibid.) and, I would add, disaffiliation.

In fact, one of the most common means participants used to redefine their own ethnic identity, by opposition, is the construction of an *Other*, represented in this case by Australian people, or, as it is referred to in this chapter, *homo australis*⁹⁹. I have collected several instances of talk in which participants, often relying on stereotypes and clichés, discursively create a not-so-flattering image of Australians, and these are discussed in the first part of the chapter.

In the second section of this chapter I analyse the negotiation of the Italian and the Australian ethnic identities adopting a more conversation analytic approach. Although, as mentioned above, the local contexts of the interactions present considerable variety, in this second section talk related to food and its preparation emerges as dominant, thus confirming the quote from De Fina reported above and the strong correlation between food and the Italian ethnic identity.

⁹⁹ The expression echoes one used in De Cillia et al. 1999 in their paper on the discursive construction of Austrian national identity. In the article they refer to *homo austriacus* as a stereotypical image of Austrians which emerged from the interviews they carried out.

4.1 Constructing the *Other*: perceptions and preconceptions about *homo australis*

As mentioned in the introduction above, differences between Italians and Australians and between life in Italy and life in Australia are among the topics most frequently discussed during the dinner parties. Comments on life in Australia are mostly positive and aimed at highlighting the benefits of living in this country compared to the participants' country of origin: Australia is perceived, in general, as a more equal country, one where people are rewarded for their value and can enjoy a superior quality of life when compared to most other countries. Australia seems to be a country where fairness and honesty are highly valued, criminality is low and people seem happy and content with their lifestyle.

As for Australians, however, participants' opinions are not as unanimously positive. In fact, Australians are often depicted using negative attributes, only occasionally balanced with a positive comment on their behaviours or perceived attitudes. It is worth noting that the discussion about Australians was far more frequent during the two dinners in which only Italians took part (dinner 2 and dinner 4), as this is probably accountable for the negative picture of Australian people that emerged from the conversations.

The talk about *homo australis*, I would argue, is mainly a discursive strategy deployed by participants to contrastingly construct their own ethnic identity, and their use of negative stereotypes about Australians is a way to express disaffiliation from the category 'Australian', however defined. The fact that this kind of talk was more frequent in Italian-only dinners also suggests that the denigration of the *Other*, especially in a migratory context where the *Others* are people from the host country, is also a way to foster solidarity among fellow Italian migrants.

Interestingly, however, in constructing the image of *homo australis*, participants often established an opposition between categories other than the Italian and Australian ones, for example opposing Australians to Europeans (extracts 1 and 5 below) or Italians to 'Anglo-Celtic' people (extract 4 below). Moreover, whereas in some instances participants manage to find an agreement on their perceptions of Australians creating a strong group identity as Italians, in other cases the attempt is not so successful. This pattern is also confirmed by the performances of interactional identity analysed in section 4.2. In the first part of the section, where I present extracts in which interactants are all Italian, identity performances mostly succeed at establishing an Italian-Australian opposition; in the second half of section 4.2 I present some passages of talk in which Australians are present and active in the conversation, and I point out how establishing a clear-cut opposition based on ethnicity often becomes problematic.

As discussed in the extracts below, the way Australians are most often depicted by participants is that of slightly naïve and childish people, lacking the attribute of *malizia*. This Italian word is traditionally similar in meaning to its English cognate *malice*, but it is also used,

especially in contemporary Italian, as a synonym of *furtività*, 'cunning'¹⁰⁰. Therefore to be lacking in *malizia* cannot be considered a clear-cut positive or negative attribute and only the context of the interaction can disambiguate the speaker's intention. The following conversation (presented as extract 1 and 2) is emblematic with this regard:

(1) Non hanno vissuto la guerra

'They didn't experience war'

(D2: Fernando, Giada, Fabio & Researcher)¹⁰¹

01 Re: oggi eravamo a freman- oggi è il primo maggio no
 02 Fe: sì
 03 (1.5)
 04 Re: e siamo rimasti sorpresi perché
 05 eravamo a fremantle stamattina e incredibilmente
 06 c'era un: un: un corteo
 07 F: una mani[festazione
 08 Re: [non la chiamerei mani-
 09 no non era una manifestazione
 10 perché non non protestavano con-
 11 (0.7)
 12 F: [non è che manifestare=
 13 Re: [era un ↑corteo
 14 F: =manifestare vuol dire essere contro qualcosa eh
 15 cioè può anche essere:
 16 Re: va beh comunque son rimasta sorpresa
 17 [perché c'era un corteo
 18 F: [va beh c'era un corteo
 19 Re: però di solito: ((*moving her hands flat in front of*
 20 *her*)) cioè proprio: (1.1) assopiti mi sembra che siano
 21 F: ma te l'ho già fatto questo discorso ((*shaking head*))
 22 perché sono fe- cioè sono [felici
 23 Re: [perché stanno bene
 24 F: quando stai bene (.)
 25 che cazzo ti devi lamentare a fare
 26 Fe: ((nodding))
 27 G: e non hanno: lo dicevo a mio padre il primo anno
 28 lui mi fa non hanno la malizia e la paura
 29 [di di un popolo=
 30 F: [((*pointing at G and nodding*))
 31 G: =che ha vissuto la guerra
 32 Re: [esatto
 33 F: [anche è vero
 34 G: eh quello
 35 Fe: ((nods))
 36 F: è vero
 37 G: cioè i- anche i vecchi di cinquant'anni qua (.)
 38 sì ma ottanta magari @

¹⁰⁰ Given the ambiguity in the meaning of the word *malizia* and the impossibility to find a suitable English equivalent, in the analysis that follows I refer to the original Italian word.

¹⁰¹ At the beginning of each extract I provide some information regarding the conversation that follows. In extract 1, for instance, D2 stands for Dinner 2 and the names listed are the pseudonyms of the people taking part in the conversation transcribed. Members of a couple are joined by a '&' symbol. For a list of all participants who took part in each dinner I refer to Appendix 3.

39 ma non: non si ricordano le bombe o:
 40 F: non le hanno mai vissute
 41 Fe: mm la vivono in modo molto nazionalistico qua
 42 cioè l'anzac day probabilmente vale
 43 è la festività che vale più del natale
 44 G: sì però: hai capito >hanno vissuto la guerra< (.)
 45 in un altro paese no qua
 46 Fe: ((nodding)) (x)
 47 G: non è che anche quelli che non andavano a combattere
 48 [non avevano cibo
 49 Fe: [(xx) ((nodding))
 50 G: non c'era nessuno che lavorava i campi o che
 51 Fe: sì sì
 52 F: o avevano paura dei tedeschi che arrivavano
 53 (1.9)
 54 F: è vero
 55 G: è come l'america cioè
 56 va beh l'america (0.9) °è peggio°
 57 Re: h
 58 Fe: hh

01 Re: *today we were in freman- today is the first of may right*
 02 Fe: *yes*
 03 *(1.5)*
 04 Re: *and we were surprised because*
 05 *we were in fremantle this morning and unbelievably*
 06 *there was a: a: a parade*
 07 F: *a rally*
 08 Re: *[i wouldn't call it a ra-*
 09 *no it wasn't a rally*
 10 *because they weren't protesting ag-*
 11 *(0.7)*
 12 F: *[it's not that rallying=*
 13 Re: *[it was a parade*
 14 F: *=rallying doesn't mean to be against something eh*
 15 *i mean it could also be:*
 16 Re: *all right anyway i was surprised*
 17 *[because there was a parade*
 18 F: *[all right there was a parade*
 19 Re: *but usually: ((moving her hands flat in front of her))*
 20 *i mean really: (1.1) they look to me like they are numb*
 21 F: *but i've told you already ((shaking head))*
 22 *because they are hap- i mean they are [happy*
 23 Re: *[because they have a good life*
 24 F: *when you have a good life (.)*
 25 *what the fuck do you need to complain about?*
 26 Fe: *((nodding))*
 27 G: *and they don't have: i was telling this to my dad the first year*
 28 *he said to me they don't have the malizia and the fear*
 29 *[of a people=*
 30 F: *[((pointing at G and nodding))*
 31 G: *=which experienced war*
 32 Re: *[exactly*
 33 F: *[that's also true*
 34 G: *yeah that*

35 Fe: ((nods))
 36 F: it's true
 37 G: i mean the- also the fifty year olds here (.)
 38 well yeah eighty year olds maybe @
 39 but they don't: they don't remember the bombs or:
 40 F: they never experienced it
 41 Fe: mm they take it very nationalistically here
 42 i mean anzac day is probably worth
 43 it's worth more than christmas as a holiday
 44 G: yeah but: you see >they experienced war <(.)
 45 in another country not here
 46 Fe: ((nodding)) (x)
 47 G: it's not that those who didn't go to war=
 48 [didn't have food
 49 Fe: [(xx) ((nodding))
 50 G: there wasn't anyone to work in the fields or to
 51 Fe: yes yes
 52 F: or they were scared of the nazis coming
 53 (1.9)
 54 F: it's true
 55 G: it's like the us i mean
 56 well the us (0.9)°are worse°
 57 Re: h
 58 Fe: hh

In the conversation prior to this extract, participants were discussing Australians' apparent lack of involvement in politics. At the beginning of extract 1, I tell the others about the parade I saw in Fremantle that day¹⁰² and I express my surprise at it, since protest and rallies do not seem to me to be as common in Australia as they are in Italy. In lines 06-18 Fabio and I negotiate the right word to use to refer to the parade: in line 06 I use the word *corteo*, 'parade', whereas in his repair in line 07 Fabio suggests the one *manifestazione*, 'protest', 'rally'. Without waiting for the end of his turn, I strongly reject his proposal (lines 8-10) implying that I intend the word *manifestazione* as closer in meaning to 'protest' (line 10). Despite Fabio's further argumentation in lines 12 and 14-15, I discard his comments with the discourse markers (Schiffrin 1987; Stame 1999) in line 16 "va beh comunque", and procede with my narrative. In line 18, echoing my words, Fabio accepts that the 'conflict' is concluded without us reaching an agreement.

Reiterating my surprise at the parade, I add that I consider Australians to be *assopiti*, 'numb', lit. 'asleep' when it comes to politics and protests for civil rights (lines 19 and 20).

In the following lines, Fabio first, and then Giada offer two possible explanations for Australians' lesser involvement in politics. Their viewpoints are fairly different: while Fabio argues that Australians care less about politics than Italians do because they are substantially happier (lines 21-22) and therefore have no need to complain and fight for their rights (lines 24-

¹⁰² This dinner was recorded on the 1st of May, Labour Day. In Italy this public holiday is traditionally celebrated with rallies and protests in defence of work rights.

25), Giada's explanation goes deeper into the country's history¹⁰³. She reports a discussion she had with her father when she first arrived in Australia ("lo dicevo a mio padre il primo anno", line 27) in which he argued that Australians do not have *malizia* or *paura* 'fear' (line 28) because they did not experience war in their own territory (line 31, see also line 39 and 44-45). Giada's proposal seems reasonable to other participants, as we can infer from my and Fabio's overlapping turns in line 32, "esatto" and 33 "anche è vero", and from Fernando's nodding in line 35. Fabio, in particular, by using the word *anche* (line 33), seems to consider this second explanation as valid as the one he proposed in lines 21-22, reiterating his agreement in line 36, "è vero".

The turns that follow (37-42), in which Giada develops her argument further, also serve to reinforce the agreement between participants, especially Fabio and Giada. After the pause in line 53, Fabio's turn in line 54, "è vero", echoes his own turns in lines 33 and 36 and serves as an 'opening' for the 'closing' of this episode (Schegloff and Sacks 1973); after the laughter in reply to Giada's parallel with the US (lines 57-58) this topic is satisfactorily concluded and, as I will discuss commenting the next extract, in the following line Giada will switch to a different aspect of it.

Interestingly, in the extract above participants seem to oppose Australians to Europeans, rather than to Italians specifically, thus establishing a contraposition between broader, supra-national ethnic identities. Fabio's explanation is in line with the stereotypical view of Australians as a happy and contented people, and so does Giada's with regards to the image of them as more naïve than Europeans. The fact that Giada likens Australia to the US (line 52), further confirms this dichotomy and, by contrast, suggests that participants, and Giada in particular, are expressing their affiliation to the ethnic category of 'European'.

As for whether being naïve and lacking *malizia* are considered positive or negative attributes, the interpretation seems to be contingent on the context of the interaction and on the speaker's intent. In the conversation above, for instance, Giada's remarks are rather neutral throughout the exchange; two of her turns, however, possibly act as tell-tales of her attitudes. In line 56, for examples, referring to the US, she defines the situation there as "anche peggio", 'even worse' than the one in Australia. Her use of the comparative *peggio* implies the idea of something that is 'bad' here and even 'worse' in America, therefore marking the effects of not having experienced war as negative attributes. This impression is confirmed when, in line 59 (see extract below), she begins a new conversation on a different aspect of the topic: she uses the word *però*, which marks an opposition between what had been said thus far and what follows,

¹⁰³ "...or lack thereof", as participants often commented on Australia's supposed lack of history compared to Europe. In this same conversation, prior to the extract reported, commenting on the lack of interest in politics Giulia said "ma perché noi abbiamo tutta la storia sotto, qua che storia c'è?", 'but because we have all the history behind, what history do they have here?'

and since she then proceeds to make a positive remark on Australians, it can be inferred that she intended the remarks on the war to have a slightly negative connotation:

(2) I 'morosi' australiani¹⁰⁴

'Australian boyfriends'

(D2: Fernando, Giada, Fabio & Researcher)

59 G: però sono (.) forse un po' più genuini,
60 nel senso se hanno da dirti qualcosa te lo dicono
61 Re: dici rispetto a noi o rispetto:
62 G: sì [io vedo:
63 Re: [sì?
64 Fe: sì non sono dietrologisti¹⁰⁵ [come gli inglesi (x)
65 G: [sì esa- no nel senso
66 la malizia che ti dicono qualcosa però vogliono dire
67 qualcos'altro che però
68 Fe: come gli inglesi
69 G: hanno (0.7) cioè sono molto più spontanei
70 io vedo il mio moroso che le cose che mi dice
71 cioè magari un ragazzo italiano le pensa ma
72 non te lo direbbe [ma:i =
73 F: [ma non te lo dice]
74 G: =assolutamente perché vuol dire(x)
75 Fe: cioè per esempio scusa
76 G: ma non lo so ma anche:
77 non lo so la sua tenerezza coi gatti
78 [va beh] °il mio moroso è come un bambino cresciuto°
79 Re: [mmmm mm]
80 @
81 G: però: hai capito tipo
82 oh sto bene con te voglio stare con te ((mimicking a
83 romantic voice and tilting her head on one side))
84 ah penso che sei quella giusta
85 Re: mmmm ((smiling))
86 G: cioè @
87 (3.3)
88 Re: forse perché gli italiani non te lo dicono
89 perché((mimicking the gesture of showing one's
90 biceps)) c'è l'immagine del: macho
91 F: [del maschio latino
92 Fe: [del macho
93 F: ma
94 G: però insomma mi ha:
95 Fe: anche perché se te lo dicessero
96 probabilmente sarebbe game over poi
97 Re: ((nodding)) mmm
98 F: @
99 Re: ((waving)) ciao
100 G: adesso mi sposi
101 (5)

¹⁰⁴ The word *moroso* (pl. *morosi*) is colloquially used in northern Italy as a synonym of *fidanzato*, 'boyfriend'.

¹⁰⁵ The adjective *dietrologista* (pl. *dietrologisti*) derives from the term *dietrologia*, which stems from *dietro*, 'behind', and refers to the "attitude to always find a usually malevolent agent *behind* all that happens" (retrieved on 07/12/2014 from <http://www.wordreference.com>; emphasis mine).

59 G: *but they are (.) maybe a bit more genuine*
60 *i mean if they have something to tell you they just say it*
61 Re: *you mean compared to us or to:*
62 G: *yeah [i see:*
63 Re: *[yeah?*
64 Fe: *yeah they are not conspiracy theorists [like the british (x)*
65 G: *[yeah exact- no i mean*
66 *the malice that they say something but they mean*
67 *something else which however*
68 Fe: *like the british*
69 G: *they have (0.7) i mean they are much more spontaneous*
70 *i see my boyfriend the things he says to me*
71 *i mean maybe an italian guy feels that way but*
72 *he would [never: tell you=*
73 F: *[but he doesn't tell you*
74 G: *= no way because it means (x)*
75 Fe: *i mean for example sorry*
76 G: *i don't know but even:*
77 *don't know his tenderness with the cats*
78 *[well] °my boyfriend is like a grown up baby°*
79 Re: *[mmmm mm*
80 *@*
81 G: *but: you know like*
82 *oh i'm happy with you i want to stay with you ((mimicking a romantic voice and*
83 *tilting her head on one side))*
84 *oh i think you are the right one*
85 Re: *mmmm ((smiling))*
86 G: *i mean @*
87 *(3.3)*
88 Re: *maybe it's because italian guys don't tell you*
89 *because ((mimicking the gesture of showing one's*
90 *biceps)) there's the image of the: macho*
91 F: *[of the latino male*
92 Fe: *[of the macho*
93 F: *ma*
94 G: *but anyway it:*
95 Fe: *also because if they told you*
96 *it would probably be game over then*
97 Re: *((nodding)) mmm*
98 F: *@*
99 Re: *((waving)) ciao*
100 G: *now you'll have to marry me*
101 *(5)*

Giada describes here another facet of her vision of *homo australis*: Australians are usually more *genuini*, 'authentic', 'genuine' (line 59), they do not, once again, have the *malizia* that Italians often have (line 66) and are more *spontanei* 'spontaneous', 'frank' (line 69).

Giada's argument, however, does not seem to be as successful as the one in the extract above. In fact, she is first asked to specify what she means (line 61), then to provide examples

(line 75); moreover, there are no response cries indicating agreement by other interactants¹⁰⁶. Only in line 88, after a pause, I show some sort of agreement with Giada providing a possible explanation for the behaviour she is describing¹⁰⁷: Italian men are probably less explicit in showing their feelings to their partners because they need to preserve the image of the ‘macho’, still strongly influencing the Italian male stereotype. In line 93 Fernando proposes another explanation: if Italian men showed their feelings so openly to their girlfriends it would be “game over”. The meaning of the English expression, however, is somewhat unclear: my turn in line 99 suggests that I interpret it in line with my previous turn (lines 88-89), that is, if the man showed his tender side to his partner she would lose interest in him because he would not comply with the ‘macho’ stereotype. Giada, instead, “adesso mi sposi” (line 100), seems to interpret Fernando’s words as referring to the fact that if a man spoke words to his girlfriend such as those she reported, she would then expect him to marry her. The ambiguity is left unresolved, as after Giada’s turn no one follows up on the topic.

Whereas I argued that in extract 1 the participants established an opposition between the social group of Australians on one side and that of Europeans on the other, with her further remark in lines 59 and 60 Giada is shifting the focus to one between Australians and Italians, in particular with regards to men. However, she does this without giving any cues, and this creates confusion in other interactants: in line 61, “dici rispetto a noi o rispetto”, I express my uncertainty about the categories she is referring to and in doing this I oppose to Australians the ‘we-group’ of Italians. My use of the pronoun *noi* in this instance is clearly ‘addressee inclusive’ (De Cilila 1999; see also Chapter I) and aims at including all the people at the table – who are all Italian – in the opposition to Australians. Despite the fact that in line 62 Giada confirms that she is comparing Australians and Italians, in line 64 Fernando establishes another opposition, the one between Australians and British based on the ground that the former do not seem to be “dietrologisti” as much as the latter are. In the following line, after a false start due to the overlap with the speech in which Fernando mentions the British (“sì esa-”), Giada rejects the link established by Fernando (“no nel senso”) and goes on to explain her argument (lines 66 and 67). However, since in line 68 Fernando reiterates the comparison with British (“come gli inglesi”), Giada needs to further clarify her intention by making the opposition explicit: in lines 69-72 she opposes the behaviour of her *moroso*, ‘boyfriend’, to the one of Italian men, “cioè magari un ragazzo italiano le pensa ma/non te lo direbbe mai assolutamente perché vuol dire”, lines 71-72.

¹⁰⁶ For a definition of ‘response cry’ see Goffman (1978): “exclamatory interjections which are not full-fledged words. (...) We see such ‘expression’ as a natural overflowing, a flooding up of previously contained feeling, a bursting of normal restraints, a case of being caught off-guard (800)”.

¹⁰⁷ In line 70 Giada had started to explain why she thinks an Italian man would never tell his partner things like those she hears from her boyfriend, but her turn was interrupted by Fernando asking for a clarification of what she meant.

Fernando, however, is still not convinced “cioè per esempio scusa”, line 75, and Giada will need to resort to an example to clarify her argument (lines 80-84).

As in extract 1, in the lines above Giada argues that Australians lack *malizia*. Whereas in extract 1, however, the fact of not having *malizia* was considered a neutral, if not negative, attribute, here, instead, it is presented as a quality, as Australians seem to be more genuine and sincere in personal relationships. Moreover, in line 78 of the extract above, “va beh il mio moroso è come un bambino cresciuto”, she likens her boyfriend to a ‘grown up baby’, and later in the evening she will extend this comparison to all Australians:

01 G: esatto
02 però: però dall'altra parte secondo me
03 son tutti un po': dei dei bambini hanno la:
04 ((Re nods)) il coso di: ahm sorprendersi ancora
05 e esser felici come i bambini
06 ((Re and Fe smile and nod))
07 cosa che in italia non trovi più cioè

01 G: *exactly*
02 *but: but on the other hand i think*
03 *they're all a bit: like like children they have the:*
04 *((Re nods)) the thing of: ahm still be surprised*
05 *and be happy like children*
06 *((Re and Fe smile and nod))*
07 *which in italy you don't see anymore i mean*

This turn represents the end of a rather long exchange about participants' perception of the role of violence in the Australian society (see extract number 5 below): replicating the pattern I have discussed in extracts 1 and 2, after having commented on a negative aspect of the *homo australis*, Giada concludes on an contrastingly positive note¹⁰⁸. In this case, she highlights the fact that Australians still have the simplicity and naivety to rejoice in and be surprised by the things life has to offer. We can therefore sum up her view of Australians so far by saying that it is as if Australians, not having being forged by the fear and the dire straits of war, maintained, for good or for bad, some sort of childhood ingenuousness.

Another aspect of *homo australis* brought up by participants in several occasions is the fact that Australians seem to be rather *rozzi*, ‘uncouth’ and lacking manners: in the following extracts the discussion about Australians and their behaviour often loses the nuance of bonhomie present in extracts 1 and 2 and acquires stronger tones and unambiguously negative connotations. In fact, as I discuss below, Australians are not only described as *rozzi*, but also as arrogant (extract 3), aggressive and even prone to physical violence (extracts 4 and 5).

¹⁰⁸ See how she begins both her turn in line 59 of extract 2 and the one in line 02 of the lines reported above with the adversative conjunction *però*, ‘but’, repeated twice in the second instance.

(3)L'accountant australiana

'The Australian accountant'

(D3: Vito, Valeria & Cesare, Antonio, Roberto, Fernando, Fabio & Researcher)

01 Vi: madonna santa io c'ho la la mia: (.)
02 eh: lei fa: mm accountant ↑no
03 e: praticamente: è australiana proprio
04 è proprio skippy da bush sai=
05 Re: [@
06 Vi: =[gira con lo ↑ute con le corna
07 V: [no::
08 Vi: [proprio no no lo ute con le corna eh?
09 C: [fantastica
10 Vi: [e::] cioè proprio: è rozzissima=
11 =a un certo punto se **te** deve **dì** una cosa o:¹⁰⁹ (.)
12 o: magari **ie rode** magari il sedere no
13 magari viene là tu **te** stai **a fà** il caffè
14 tutti tranquilli
15 poi la mattina capito tutti rincoglioniti
16 (xx) **de lavorà**
17 arriva lei (0.5) magari **te fà** (0.8)
18 devi usare la macchinetta fammelo **fà** a me
19 così che **te** guarda così no
20 proprio da australiana arrogante che eh:(0.8)
21 (x) un po' un po' così e poi:
22 C: (hh)
23 (1.2)
24 Vi: sì non sanno molto farci con:
25 anche quando magari sai (.)
26 **te** rode un po' il sedere no
27 **te** rode però
28 Re: cosa [vuol dire
29 Vi: [cerca: no che magari c'hai
30 A: [**te rode er culo**
31 R: [no veramente
32 non sai:
33 Vi: che **te** rode un po' nel senso che: [sei un po'
34 Fe: [ti dà fastidio
35 Re: ti dà fastidio qualcosa
36 R: sei infastidito di qualcosa
37 Re: ((nods))
38 Vi: di qualc↑osa la mattina magari sai:
39 @
40 R: @ ((drops her head))
41 A: la mattina **te** rode il culo
42 F: @@
43 C: **aó** ma vedi questi australiani che ro:zzi che sono

¹⁰⁹ Vito's speech is delivered with a strong Roman accent, which I decided to reflect in the transcript not only to be faithful to recordings but also because his accent was often commented on by other participants. Moreover, in this extract, Vito's accent and his use of Roman expressions have a crucial role in the dynamics of the conversation and in the discursive negotiation of categories. Elements typical of the Roman dialect are highlighted in the text in bold type.

44 Re: @@
 45 F: @@
 46 (C): **te** rode il culo (xx)
 47 @@
 48 Vi: NO E' VERO
 49 **te** vai a **fà** un bicchiere di caffè e stai[(xx)
 50 R: [no ma è
 51 australiano non:
 52 @
 53 Vi: ma questi so degli arroganti (x)
 54 C: [xx
 55 Vi: [ti guardano negli occhi ti sfidano capito
 56 Re: @
 57 Vi: cioè non è che dici tu stai stai là: ((hands
 58 together moving up and down)) ma che ca:zzo vuoi @
 59 Re: @
 60 A: @
 61 Vi (x) allora le ho fatto no prendi usala
 62 Re: @
 63 Vi: tran↑quilla quando hai fatto↓: me la riuso io
 64 ((general laughter))
 65 Vi: stava là col dente avvelenato [(x)
 66 Re: [da↑vvero
 67 Vi: sì no ma [l'australiano:
 68 C: [stava là @
 69 Vi: quando: [quando è inviperito: è:
 70 C: [col dente avvelenato @
 71 Re: @
 72 Vi: è molto diretto
 73 (1.8)
 74 (x): mm
 75 Re: non l'avevo notata questa
 76 (1.1)
 77 Re: cià dai torta

01 Vi: *my goodness i've got my: (.)*
 02 *eh: she is: mm an accountant ↑no*
 03 *and: basically: she is really australian*
 04 *she is really skippy from the bush you know=*
 05 Re: [*@*
 06 Vi: *=[she drives her ↑ute with horns*
 07 V: [*no::*
 08 Vi: [*really no no] ute with horns ↑eh*
 09 C: [*fantastic*
 10 Vi: [*e::] i mean really: she's super uncouth=*
 11 *=at some stage if she's got something to tell you or: (.)*
 12 *or: maybe something pisses her off y'know*
 13 *maybe she comes there*
 14 *you are making yourself a coffe*
 15 *everyone's relaxed*
 16 *and then in the morning y'know everyone is out of it*
 17 *(xx) of work*
 18 *she arrives (.) she goes like (0.8)*
 19 *are you using the machine let me use it*
 20 *like that she looks at you like that right*
 21 *really like an arrogant australian that eh: (.)*

22 (x) a bit a bit like that and then:
 23 C: (hh)
 24 (1.2.)
 25 Vi: yeah they don't have very good manners: also when maybe y'know (.)
 26 something pisses you off y'know
 27 it pisses you but
 28 Re: what [does it mean
 29 Vi: [tries: no that maybe you have
 30 A: [it shits you off
 31 R: [no really
 32 you don't know:
 33 Vi: that it pisses you off a bit in the sense that: [you are a bit
 34 Fe [it bothers you
 35 Re: something bothers you
 36 R: something is bothering you
 37 Re: ((nods))
 38 Vi: something in the morning maybe y'know:
 39 @
 40 Re: @ ((drops her head))
 41 A: in the morning it shits you off
 42 F: @@
 43 C: look how ru:de are these australians
 44 Re: @@
 45 F: @@
 46 (C): it shits you off (xx)
 47 @@
 48 Vi: NO IT'S TRUE
 49 you go make yourself a cup of coffee and you're[(xx)
 50 R: [no but he's
 51 australian don't:
 52 @
 53 Vi: but these people are arrogant (x)
 54 C: [xx
 55 Vi: [they look at you in the eyes they challenge you y'know
 56 Re: @
 57 Vi: i mean it's not that say you are there: ((hands
 58 together moving up and down)) but what the fuck do you want hh
 59 Re: @
 60 A: @
 61 Vi (x) so i told her go for it use it
 62 Re: @
 63 Vi: easy when you're ↓done: i'll use it
 64 @
 65 Vi: she was standing there bearing a grudge [(x)
 66 Re: [↑really
 67 Vi: yes no but [the australian:
 68 Fr: [she was standing there hh
 69 Vi: when: [when he is angry: is:
 70 C: [bearing a grudge hh
 71 Re: hhh
 72 Vi: is very direct
 73 (1.8)
 74 (x): mm
 75 Re: i hadn't noticed this one

76 (1.1)
77 Re: allright dessert

In the conversation leading to extract 3 Antonio was telling other participants about a stand-up comedy duo he had seen on TV making jokes about Australian accent and stereotypes (see comments to extract 5 in Chapter VI for details). Vito picks up on this topic and begins a narrative about a girl who works as an accountant for his company. The transfer he uses in line 02 to describe the girl's position ("eh: lei fa: mm accountant no") is marked quite strongly by several hesitations (see prolonged sounds in lines 01 and 02) and a pause (line 01) and seems to be due to a temporary difficulty in finding an adequate Italian equivalent¹¹⁰. In line 03 he provides the first categorisation of the girl, "è australiana proprio", that is, she perfectly fulfils the Australian stereotype and in the lines that follow he goes on to specify what being 'really Australian' means to him. In line 04 he gives another, more colourful definition of the girl, "è proprio skippy da bush"¹¹¹ and then he adds that she drives a utility van with cow-horns on it.

Other participants react in different ways to Vito's description: I laugh (line 05) at his use of the expression in line 04, Valeria can hardly believe what he is saying (line 07) and Cesare expresses his sarcastic appreciation for the accountant ("fantastica", line 09). In line 10 Vito concludes this first part of the narrative by referring to her as *rozzissima*, 'very uncouth' and, in the following line, he starts to recount an episode to prove his point. The girl does not have very good manners and she is quite blunt in asking what she wants. So much so that in line 20 Vito adds another nuance to this not-so-pleasant portrait of the girl: not only is she rude, she is also arrogant. The way he puts it, "proprio da australiana arrogante", suggests that he sees arrogance not just as a characteristic of that girl but as a category-bound attribute of being Australian.

Other interactants, despite the fact that they keep smiling (or giggling as Cesare does in line 23) and are clearly amused by Vito's narrative, do not show signs of agreement. This is why, after a pause (line 24), Vito steps in again and feels the need to add more evidence to support his argument. In line 25 he switches to the plural "non sanno molto farci", thus signalling explicitly that he is referring to Australians in general, but in line 28 his narrative is interrupted by my turn in which I ask to clarify the Roman expression he has been using "ti rode il sedere", 'something is bothering you'¹¹². As other interactants step in, this aside confers a whole new

¹¹⁰ Anecdotal evidence based on my own experience in Australia seems to suggest that the word 'accountant' is one of the transfers most regularly used by Italians when talking about job positions. This is probably due to the fact that possible Italian translations such as *segretaria* or *ragioniera* do not satisfactorily cover the meaning of the English expression. On a more general note, the recordings showed that in the linguistic practices of new migrants the semantic domain of work is usually very rich in English transfers.

¹¹¹ Originating from the 1960s Australian television series *Skippy the bush kangaroo*, Skippy has since then become a stereotypical nickname of Australian people.

¹¹² Literally 'it gnaws at your behind'. This is a typical Roman expression, although its use has spread also outside Rome. It is more frequently used in the more vulgar version "ti/te rode il culo" (see line 41 of the

rhythm to the conversation: Roberto, who is also from the Lazio region (see Chapter VI), expresses his surprise at the fact that I do not know the meaning of the idiom (“no veramente/non sai”, lines 31 and 32) and then, together with Fernando (line 34) goes on to explain it to me (“sei infastidito di qualcosa”, line 36). Other participants react with laughter to the next turn by Vito (“di qualcosa la mattina magari sai”, line 38), in which he tries to explain the expression he used.

From this moment on the conversation acquires a completely different tone. Antonio’s turn in line 41 is the first of a series of jokes about Vito’s narrative, based mainly on his broad Roman accent¹¹³. In line 41, “la mattina te rode il culo”, Antonio paraphrases what Vito has been saying mimicking his accent and sparking loud laughter among participants. So does Cesare, whose turn in line 43, “aó ma vedi sti australiani che rozzi che sono”, has a key role in the extract: putting on Vito’s accent, stereotypically represented by the Roman interjection *aó*, he makes fun of the fact that, while Vito is complaining about Australians’ supposed *rozzezza*, the language he has been using is also quite *rozzo*. In doing so, Cesare is appealing to a set of beliefs shared by other participants, more specifically to the image the Roman dialect has in Italy of an ‘uncouth-sounding’ linguistic code. The accusation of uncouthness, therefore, is redirected at Vito, who now needs to defend himself and his argument (see emphasis in line 48 “no è vero”). In line 50 (“no ma è australiano”) Roberto makes another joke about Vito: although his turn is left unfinished due to the overlap with Vito in line 49, we can propose an interpretation based on the link established by Vito himself between Australians and uncouthness. In other words, Roberto is sarcastically categorising Vito as Australian as he presents the category-bound attribute of uncouthness. Vito, however, is not discouraged by the sarcasm of other participants and, on the contrary, his invective against Australians acquires even stronger tones (“ma questi so degli arroganti”, line 53).

In lines 57-65 the narrative about the accountant reaches a conclusion. In line 65 (“stava là col dente avvelenato”) he uses another idiomatic expression *avere il dente avvelenato*, lit. ‘to have a poisoned tooth’, ‘to bear a grudge’, which, in this context, can probably be considered a more polite and non-dialectal equivalent of the one he used before “ti rode il sedere”. Once again, after my turn expressing surprise in line 66, Vito switches from referring to the accountant, to making a general consideration about all Australians (line 67): his use of the particularising synecdoche (*pars pro toto*), “l’australiano” is effective in conveying the idea that he is deploying the collective singular to refer to all Australians, a strategy often used, as De Cillia et al. put it (1999: 162), for “hasty stereotypical generalisations”.

extract above), therefore we can consider Vito’s use of “sedere” euphemistic, as he probably thought it to be more acceptable in the context of the interaction.

¹¹³ It is worth remembering that Vito, Antonio, Cesare and Valeria are good friends, whereas other participants met for the first time during this dinner.

After the conversation peaked in volume, pace, intensity and sarcasm in the middle section (lines 37-65) in the last few lines the tone is less aggressive and more neutral, even though Cesare still echoes Vito's turns with giggles (lines 68, 70). After the episode is concluded (see pause in line 73), I add that I had never noticed this aspect of Australians ("non l'avevo notata questa", line 75), before going on to offer participants dessert.

Overall, in the extract above, Vito used quite strong terms to criticise Australians, categorising them as *rozzi* and *arroganti*. However, he did not receive any support by other participants, who, instead, through the means of sarcasm and laughter, redirect at him the accusation of uncouthness he intended to move against Australians.

As I mentioned above, however, on other occasions participants used even stronger tones and made harsher criticism against Australians, as the following extract exemplifies:

(4a) La cultura della rissa I

'The culture of the fight'

(D2: Fernando, Giada, Fabio & Researcher)

01 F: è una moda- dobbiamo importarla in italia questa moda
 02 Re: [il glassing
 03 F: [spaccarsi i bicchieri in testa
 04 Fe: hhh
 05 F: una nuova moda
 06 Re: ma forse ce l'abbiamo
 07 ma non abbiamo un nome per definirla
 08 (0.5)
 09 F: no:
 10 Fe: no non penso che
 11 Re: non ci si tira [i bicchieri
 12 F: [ma qui son fuori
 13 G: [sono molto più:=
 14 F: [son fuori di testa
 15 G: =violenti [quando bevono
 16 F: [°sì°
 17 Re: vero?
 18 F: c'hanno hanno [una aggressività
 19 Re: [la rissa la rissa
 20 ((raising her hands in front of her))
 21 F: la rissa
 22 Fe: è vero la rissa
 23 Re: [la rissa post serata
 24 G: [si si si
 25 F: [ma sai i- il coinquilino quello
 26 il coinquilino irlandese
 27 Re: poverino alla fine [lui era normale
 28 F: [era era sai default
 29 sabato sera ((hand gesture)) si beve e ci si pe- cioè:
 30 [si fa a botte
 31 G: [ci si pesta eheh
 32 F: ci si pesta [perché è una: una: cosa:
 33 Re: [infatti io (x) non lo sa↑pevo
 34 cioè la prima volta che l'ho visto tornare=

35 G: [(x)
 36 Re: =[con tutte le labbra rotte ho detto
 37 basta noi ce ne andiamo
 38 >ma con chi cazzo stiamo vivendo< ((moving her hand
 39 up and down with fingers grouped in the middle))
 40 e invece poverino era normale
 41 Fe: era normale eh
 42 stavolta ha vinto lui domani vinco [(io)
 43 [@@

01 F: *it's a fashion- we should import this fashion to italy*
 02 Re: *[glassing*
 03 F: *[to smash a glass on someone's head*
 04 Fe: *hhh*
 05 F: *a new fashion*
 06 Re: *but maybe we have it*
 07 *but we don't have a name for it*
 08 *0.5.)*
 09 F: *no:*
 10 Fe: *no i don't think that*
 11 Re: *you don't throw [glasses at each other*
 12 F: *[but here they're out*
 13 G: *[they're a lot more:=*
 14 F: *[they're out of their minds*
 15 G: *=violent [when they drink*
 16 F: *[°yes°*
 17 Re: *isn't it?*
 18 F: *they're they're[so aggressive*
 19 Re: *[the fight the fight ((raising her hands in*
 20 *front of her))*
 21 F: *the fight*
 22 Fe: *true the fight*
 23 Re: *[the fight after a night out ((still hand gesturing))*
 24 G: *[yes yes yes*
 25 F: *[but you know the- the housemate that*
 26 *the irish housemate*
 27 Re: *poor thing in the end [he was normal*
 28 F: *[it was it was you know by default*
 29 *saturday night((hand gesture)) you drink and you fi- i mean:*
 30 *[you have a fight*
 31 G: *[you fight eheh*
 32 F: *you fight [because it's a: a: thing:*
 33 Re: *[in fact i (x) didn't know it*
 34 *i mean the first time i saw him coming back=*
 35 G: *[(x)*
 36 Re: *=[with his lips all split i went*
 37 *that's it we are going*
 38 *>who the fuck are we living with< ((moving her hand*
 39 *up and down with fingers grouped in the middle))*
 40 *but poor thing he was normal*
 41 Fe: *he was normal eh*
 42 *this time he won tomorrow (i) [win*
 43 [@@

At the beginning of the extract participants are sharing their view of Australians as rather aggressive people, especially when they go out at night; in lines 01-11 they are referring to the so-called 'glassing', that is, the action of injuring someone by throwing a glass towards them, and participants sarcastically comment on the fact that this phenomenon is not at all common in Italy. My turn in lines 06-07, "ma forse ce l'abbiamo/ma non abbiamo un nome per definirla", in which I suggest that maybe 'glassing' is also done in Italy but there is not a word to refer to it, elicits a unanimous reaction in other participants. Fabio and Fernando strongly deny my hypothesis (lines 09 and 10) and Fabio goes on to express his disbelief at the levels of physical violence he experienced in Australia ("ma qui son fuori", line 12 and "son fuori di testa", line 14).

In lines 19-20 my hand gesture suggests that in Australia *la rissa*, 'the fight', is considered a 'must', a part of the culture of the country and a natural conclusion to a night out ("la rissa post serata", line 23). The word *rissa* echoes in the lines below, in which Fabio (21) and Fernando (22) express their agreement; Giada also shares this view, as we can infer from her response cry in line 24, "sì sì sì". In lines 25-40 Fabio and I tell the others about the Irish man with whom we used to share the house and I tell them about my surprise when I first saw him coming back home after a fight (lines 33-40): a few years later, however, I realised that he was not an exception ("alla fine lui era normale", line 26 and again in line 38). Once again, participants all agree on the fact that in Australia fights often happen by "default" (line 28) after the abuse of alcohol (lines 29) and are almost considered "normal" (lines 40-43).

From the point of view of the discursive construction of the opposition between Italians and Australians, lines 06-18 seem to be particularly meaningful: after my turn in lines 06-07, in which I establish the 'we-group' of Italians by using verbs in the first person plural, "ma forse ce l'abbiamo/ma non abbiamo un nome per definirla", Fabio's turn in line 12, "ma qui son fuori", refers to the counterpart, Australians, through the use of the adverb of place *qui*, 'here' and the verb in the third person plural. Giada's turn in line 13 and 15, "sono molto più/violenti quando bevono" supports Fabio's argument by implicitly comparing Italians and Australians with regards of the effects of the abuse of alcohol¹¹⁴. In lines 16, 17 and 18 Fabio and I provide further support to this stance.

Interestingly enough, however, when, in lines 25-26, Fabio makes an example to support his argument, the protagonist is not Australian, but Irish ("ma sai i- il coinquilino quello il coinquilino irlandese"). No one points out the discrepancy and, instead, all other participants seem to accept the Irishman as a good representative of violence in the Australian society. This

¹¹⁴ This seems to be the most fitting and logical interpretation of Giulia's words in lines 12 and 14; another possible meaning is that Australians *become* a lot more violent after drinking, but I believe that, if this was the case, she would have used an expression such as *diventano molto più violenti*. It appears more likely, instead, that with this turn Giulia is aligning with others in comparing Italians and Australians with regards to violence.

may suggest that, after comparing Italians and Australians in lines 01-17, the focus has now shifted towards an opposition involving broader categories, that is, Italians and Anglo-Celtic people. This view is confirmed in extract 4b below, in which participants link the tendency to physical violence to Australia's British heritage.

In the conversation after line 43, not included in the transcript, participants reinforce this agreement taking turns in recounting episodes of violence they witnessed during their stay in Australia. When the transcript resumes, participants are trying to find possible explanations for this increased tendency to physical violence they observe in Australia.

(4b) La cultura della rissa II

44 G: ma secondo me forse è anche l'ambiente
 45 perché sono forse più istintivi animaleschi =
 46 Fe: [è un retaggio inglese eh=
 47 G: =[visto l'ambiente((moves hands in a circle in front
 48 of her))
 49 Fe: =[perché se vai in inghilterra
 50 [c'hanno lo stesso problema
 51 Re: [sì esatto
 52 F: [è uguale è uguale
 53 Fe: i sette mesi che ho fatto [lassù
 54 F: [non so se è l'alcool o:
 55 o se davvero è proprio culturale
 56 Fe: è culturale e: em: sì e ovviamente l'alcool è
 57 F: aiuta
 58 Fe: aiuta

44 G: *but i think maybe it's also the environment*
 45 *because maybe they are more instinctual bestial =*
 46 Fe: *[it's a british legacy eh=*
 47 G: *=[given the environment((moves hands in a circle in front*
 48 *of her))*
 49 Fe: *=[because if you go to england*
 50 *[they've the same problem*
 51 Re: *[yes exactly*
 52 F: *[it's the same it's the same*
 53 Fe: *the seven months i spent [up there*
 54 F: *[don't know if it's alcohol or:*
 55 *or if it really is cultural*
 56 Fe: *it's cultural and: em: yes of course the alcohol is:*
 57 F: *it helps*
 58 Fe: *it helps*

The hypotheses proposed by Giada (lines 44-45 and 47) and Fernando (line 46 and 49-50) are very different and somewhat contrasting: whereas she suggests that the Australian environment may have an effect on its people, making them "più istintivi, animaleschi", he argues that the reason is cultural and has to do with Australia's British heritage. Giada's focus on the environment, which, as I discuss below, is brought up again later in the conversation (see extract

5) represents an interesting point. Although she does not specify further what it is about the Australian environment that could make people more aggressive, we can infer from her hand gesture in line 47 that she perceives Australia as a somewhat mightier and wilder environment: her hands, in fact, form big circles in front of her, referring to the vastitude of the Australian territory.

Fabio (“non so se è l'alcool o se davvero è proprio culturale”, lines 54-55) adds a third option to the conversation by proposing that it may be the abuse of alcohol that makes people more prone to violence. This possibility seems to convince most participants, as Fernando accepts alcohol as a co-factor together with the cultural element (lines 56 and 58) and Giada had already cited drinking as a cause of aggressive behaviour in the conversation above (“sono molto piu' violenti quando bevono”, lines 13 and 15).

Environment, cultural heritage and abuse of alcohol, however, are not the only possible explanations for the increased tendency to violence of *homo australis*: as the conversation proceeds and reaches a climax, a further, more definitive hypothesis is suggested.

(5a) Il doppio cromosoma 'Y' I

'The double 'Y' chromosome'

(D2: Fernando, Giada, Fabio & Researcher)

59 G: e mi diceva il mio professore eh ho fatto un esame
 60 che ci spiegava che tanti eh uomini australiani
 61 in australia s- ehm soprattutto
 62 hanno il doppio: 'Y'¹¹⁵ (1.6)
 63 cioè sono uo- s- è 'X' e 'Y' l'uomo
 64 F: si si si si
 65 G: ma hanno il doppio cromosoma [maschile
 66 F: [maschile
 67 Fe: [sono uomini (xx)
 68 G: quindi sono più aggressivi
 69 F: a: wow [super testosterone
 70 G: [sono più aggressivi e tanti di questi sono
 71 tipo (.) killer a- a-
 72 Re: oddio
 73 G: nel senso anche: hehehe
 74 Fe: no però è [strano
 75 F: [questo è un retaggio dici del:=
 76 G: [ma pro-
 77 F: =diciamo dei convicts che sono arrivati qua
 78 cioè dei dei: detenuti
 79 G: ma [no forse è più=
 80 F: [che magari:
 81 G: =una una concentrazione una casualità non lo so
 82 e mi diceva che (là) eh:
 83 in australia non sono neanche considerati-
 84 cioè perché è una malattia genetica alla fine=

¹¹⁵ Giulia is referring here to the 'XYY Syndrome', a genetic condition in which a man is born with a double male chromosome. The condition is linked to learning disorders and socialisation difficulties.

85 F: [da:i
86 G: =[non è perseguibile
87 F: [che roba
88 G: [una cosa del genere non so se è ancora così
89 o se [(ne hanno) altre
90 Fe: [però di fatto qua come come: criminalità
91 tipo serial killer così ce ne son pochissimi
92 (1.3)
93 Fe: cioè adesso va beh son venti milioni gli australiani
94 F: [e hanno molto spazio
95 Fe: [(xx) hanno molto spazio
96 però voglio dire cioè a parte qualcuno uno qua a perth
97 che c'è sta- due [che c'è stato
98 Re: [qua a claremont
99 Fe: sì qua a claremont [poi c'è stato uno
100 F: [tra l'altro sospettiamo
101 che visse in questa casa qui di fianco

59 G: *and my professor was telling me eh i took a course*
60 *which explained us that many eh australian man in australia e-*
61 *ehm especially*
62 *have the double: 'Y' (1.6)*
63 *i mean they're m- the man is 'X' and 'Y'*
64 F: *yeah yeah yeah yeah*
65 G: *but they have the double [male chromosome*
66 F: *[male*
67 Fe: *[they are men (xx)*
68 G: *so they are more aggressive*
69 F: *oh: wow [super testosterone*
70 G: *[they're more aggressive and ma- many of them are like*
71 *killers a- a-*
72 F: *oh my god*
73 G: *i mean also: hehehe*
74 Fe: *no but it's [strange*
75 F: *[this is an legacy you mean of the:=*
76 G: *[but pro-*
77 *=say of the convicts who arrived here*
78 *i mean of the the: convicts*
79 G: *but [no maybe it's more:=*
80 F: *[which maybe:*
81 G: *=a: a: concentration a coincidence i don't know*
82 *and he was saying that (there) eh:*
83 *in australia they aren't even considered-*
84 *i mean because it's a genetic condition in the end=*
85 F: *[c'mo:n*
86 G: *=[they're not liable*
87 F: *[far out*
88 G: *[something like that i don't know if it's still like that*
89 *or if [they (have) other*
90 Fe: *[but actually here as as for: criminality*
91 *like serial killers like that there are very few*
92 *(1.3)*
93 Fe: *now i mean allright australians are twenty million*
94 F: *[and they've got a lot of space*
95 Fe: *[(xx) they've got a lot of space*

cosa del genere”) and then doubts that the law may have changed. In line 90 Fernando, who had already tried to contradict Giada’s point in line 74 (“no però è strano”), comments that despite this supposed genetic abnormality Australia has a very low number of murders. When he mentions a serial killer who acted in Perth a few years ago, the conversation is temporarily shifted to the fact that the killer was acting in the same area where the dinner is being held. Fabio (lines 100-101) adds that there are suspicions that he was actually living in the house next door and, in the lines not included, goes on explaining what the neighbours told us about these suspicions.

Once the topic diversion is concluded, in line 102 I bring the conversation back to the supposed genetic diversity of Australian men.

(5b) Il doppio cromosoma 'Y' II

102 Re: il cromosoma
 103 G: beh
 104 F: cromosoma- non la sapevo sta cosa
 105 (1)
 106 F: però: adesso che me lo dici
 107 Re: quindi le donne cos'è 'XX'
 108 G: ics ics
 109 Fe: son più femmine ((smiling and opening his hands in
 110 front of him))
 111 Re: l'uomo è ['XY'=
 112 G: ['XY'
 113 Re: =però qui ci sono: alcuni che ce l'hanno:
 114 G: sì non so se- adesso mi ricordo-
 115 può capitare ovunque ovviamente
 116 se capitano due 'Y' insieme ma il fatto che diceva è
 117 che: in australia non potessero perseguirli [per legge
 118 Re: [a:h
 119 G: perché: è [considerato una malattia genetica
 120 F: [sei tro- sei troppo maschio
 121 G: nel senso sei violento
 122 sei f fondamentalmente più violento di uno normale
 123 Re: mmm
 124 G: però non possiamo farti niente
 125 F: mannaggia
 126 G: se tu: spacchi i denti a qualcuno
 127 Fe: va beh sì eh:
 128 F: quindi prima controllo [se sono doppio 'Y'
 129 G: [però ecco
 130 Re: @
 131 F: poi dopo ti posso ammazzare((to Re))e nessuno può da-
 132 @
 133 Re: ma tu sei italiano eh non se:
 134 G: [non vale
 135 F: [beh che c'entra se sono doppio 'Y'
 136 @
 137 ((F exits the room))
 138 (7.6)
 139 G: non so c'hanno molto il survival

140 Fe: e beh sì
 141 G: perché devono @
 142 Fe: e lo capisco questo lo capisco
 143 G: esatto
 144 però: però dall'altra parte secondo me
 145 son tutti un pò: dei dei bambini hanno la:
 146 ((Re nods)) il coso di: ahm sorprendersi ancora
 147 e esser felici come i bambini
 148 ((Re and Fe smile and nod))
 149 cosa che in italia non trovi più cioè
 150 Re: [in europa in generale
 151 Fe: [forse perché non cono-
 152 G: [hai tro-
 153 hai troppi strati

102 Re: *the chromosome*
 103 G: *well*
 104 F: *chromosome- i didn't know about it*
 105 (1)
 106 F: *but: now that you tell me*
 107 Re: *so what's women 'XX'*
 108 G: *'XX'*
 109 Fe: *they are more feminine ((smiling and opening his hands in front*
 110 *of him))*
 111 Re: *men are ['XY'=*
 112 G: *['XY'*
 113 Re: *=but here there are: some who have:*
 114 G: *yeah i don't know if- now i remember-*
 115 *it can happen everywhere*
 116 *if you happen to have two y but what he was saying is that:*
 117 *in australia they can't sue them [by the law because:=*
 118 Re: *[oh:*
 119 G: *=it's [considered a genetic condition*
 120 F: *[you're t- too masculine*
 121 G: *i mean you're violent you're b- basically more violent than*
 122 *a normal person*
 123 Re: *mmm*
 124 G: *but we can't do anything to you*
 125 F: *damn*
 126 G: *if you: smash someone's teeth*
 127 Fe: *allright yeah eh:*
 128 F: *so i'll check first [if i'm double 'Y'*
 129 G: *[but yes*
 130 Re: *@*
 131 F: *and then i can kill you ((to Re)) and nobody can-*
 132 *@*
 133 Re: *but you're italian eh don't know if:*
 134 G: *[it doesn't count*
 135 F: *[so what if i'm double 'Y'*
 136 *@*
 137 *((F exits the room))*
 138 (7.6)
 139 G: *i don't know they really have this survival thing*
 140 Fe: *well yes*
 141 G: *because they have to @*

142 Fe: *and i understand i understand this*
 143 G: *exactly*
 144 *but: but on the other hand i think they're all a bit:*
 145 *like like children they have the:*
 146 *((Re nods)) the thing of: ahm still be surprised and be*
 147 *happy like children*
 148 *((Re and Fe smile and nod))*
 149 *which in italy you don't see anymore*
 150 Re: *[in europe in general*
 151 Fe: *[maybe because they don't -*
 152 G: *[you have too m-*
 153 *too many layers*

In lines 107 and 111 I ask for a further confirmation that my understanding is correct regarding the 'XYY Syndrome' and, in answering my request, Giada explains the situation in quite different terms to the ones she used to first refer to it: she starts by warning the others that she may not recall it accurately ("sì non so se adesso mi ricordo", line 114) then softens her argument even further ("può capitare ovunque ovviamente", line 115) and then she claims that the real difference about Australia is that here people with the 'XYY Syndrome' cannot be sued by the law (116-119). In line 118, with the response cry "ah", I acknowledge the change of perspective.

Therefore, what was first presented as the ultimate proof of diversity, the scientific explanation of Australians' aggressive behaviours, is now reframed as a legal peculiarity more than anything else. For the sake of this analysis, however, what matters is the way Giada introduced the topic: when she first mentions the genetic condition (line 59) the conversation is reaching a climax with regards to participants' disapproval of Australians' violent behaviours, and a scientific validation of the 'difference' was well fitting; as the conversation proceeded, however, and probably also because of Fernando's sceptical replies (lines 74 and 90), and Fabio's (lines 75, 77-78) and my (lines 107, 111) requests for clarification, the argument is further discussed and eventually revisited by Giada herself (lines 116-119).

This new way to look at the situation, somewhat kinder to Australians, is conducive to Giada's final remarks (reported here for convenience):

139 G: *non so c'hanno molto il survival*
 140 Fe: *e beh sì*
 141 G: *perché devono @*
 142 Fe: *e lo capisco questo lo capisco*
 143 G: *esatto*
 144 *però: però dall'altra parte secondo me*
 145 *son tutti un pò: dei dei bambini hanno la:*
 146 *((Re nods)) il coso di: ahm sorprendersi ancora*
 147 *e esser felici come i bambini*
 148 *((Re and Fe smile and nod))*
 149 *cosa che in italia non trovi più cioè*
 150 Re: *[in europa in generale*
 151 Fe: *[forse perché non cono-*
 152 G: *[hai tro-*

153 hai troppi strati

139 G: *i don't know they really have this survival thing*
140 Fe: *well yes*
141 G: *because they have to @*
142 Fe: *and i understand i understand this*
143 G: *exactly*
144 *but: but on the other hand i think they're all a bit:*
145 *like like children they have the:*
146 *((Re nods)) the thing of: ahm still be surprised and be*
147 *happy like children*
148 *((Re and Fe smile and nod))*
149 *which in italy you don't see anymore*
150 Re: *[in europe in general*
151 Fe: *[maybe because they don't -*
152 G: *[you have too m-*
153 *too many layers*

These lines are well representative of the participants' view of *homo australis*: Giada's interesting transfer "il survival" encapsulates all the negative attributes ascribed to Australians, such as uncouthness, arrogance, aggressive behaviour, and even violence, but in a neutral, non judgemental way. After the discussion about the possible causes, the explanation for these rather primitive behaviours that ultimately seems more plausible is therefore the influence of the environment, which, being somewhat rougher than the European one, forces people to a modern 'survival of the fittest'.

In her last extended turn, however, Giada highlights the positive sides of Australians' simple and happy life: Australian society is not burdened by the superstructure which centuries of European history have created and Australians can therefore have a more authentic and instinctive, if somewhat naïve, lifestyle.

4.2 Negotiating identities within the Italian vs Australian opposition

In this section I analyse extracts of conversation in which ethnic identity, and in particular the Italian-Australian opposition, is negotiated through talk. Most interestingly, for the great majority of the examples below, the topic discussed by participants is food related. This is certainly not a coincidence, firstly because of the setting of the recordings, dinner parties, which naturally lead to a stronger focus on food; secondly, and most importantly, because food is among the main core values of Italian culture (see Chapter II, section 2.3.1) and therefore has a fundamental role in the shaping of migrants' ethnic identity, especially as opposed to the identity of the host country (De Fina 2007a; see also Lakoff 2006).

Another point worth noting is that the great majority of the extracts below present identity work related to the identity of someone who was, at the time, in an Italian-Australian couple: Giada, for instance, was then engaged and is now married to an Australian man and

Hannah, one of the two Australians who took part in the research, is in a *de facto* relationship with Ivo. This suggests that being in a mixed relationship may elicit more challenges to one's ethnic identity due to everyday contact with their partners and their 'entourage'. The somewhat more vivid and contrasted nature of this individuals' ethnic identity is evident in the identity work they carried out in the conversations, as the following extracts illustrate.

(6) La macchinetta della pasta

'The pasta machine'

((D2: Fernando, Giada, Fabio & Researcher))

((Re busy in the kitchen))

01 Fe: ma tu hai preso la pasta quella quella
02 sai al supermercato vendono le sfoglie
03 G: no no l'ho fatta
04 F: [ah l'hai fatta ((raising eyebrows in surprise))
05 Fe: [l'hai fatta proprio tu
06 F: wow
07 G: ((mimicking the gesture of turning a handle))
08 gnegnè gnegnè gnegnè ((onomatopoeic))
09 F: ah hai la ma- hai la macchinetta ((smiling))
10 G: sì tim un giorno è tornato a casa
11 tic guarda dieci dollari
12 F: a::h
13 Fe: dieci do- [dove
14 F: [dieci [dollari ↑dove
15 Re: [dieci ↑dollari
16 G: (dieci) dollari la macchinetta
17 non lo so era seconda mano
18 Fe: magari in qualche garage sale
19 sai che [fanno le garage
20 G: [s:ì non lo so era andato a lavorare l'ha vista
21 F: wo:w
22 Fe: però costa centonovantanove una [roba del genere
23 G: [ma quella ((mimicking
24 the gesture of turning a handle)) ma no elettrica
25 F: sì
26 G: a mano
27 F: sì quella a mano
28 Fe: eh insomma sai qua [quelle cose lì (le paghi)
29 F: [quella dove tu da bambino] giri la
30 manovella ((pretending to turn a handle with both
31 hands)) e la mamma passa la pasta ((pretending
32 to put a pasta sheet in the pastamachine))
33 G: e e tutti (.) ma ma sai come farle sai come (xxx)
34 F: [ə
35 Fe: [ə
36 G: son stata costretta ad [aiutare mia ↑madre
37 F: [mi son fatto due coglioni così
38 Fe: ə
39 G: Giada cosa fai oggi
40 Fe: ce l'ho scritto nel dna
41 G: esatto

01 Fe: *but did you buy the pasta the one the one*
 02 *you know at the supermarket they sell the sheets*
 03 G: *no no i made it*
 04 F: *[oh you made it ((raising eyebrows in surprise))*
 05 Fe: *[you made it yourself*
 06 F: *wow*
 07 G: *((mimicking the gesture of turning a handle))*
 08 *gnegnè gnegnè gnegnè ((onomatopoeic))*
 09 F: *ah you've got the m- you've got the machine ((smiling))*
 10 G: *yes tim came home one day*
 11 *there you go look ten dollars*
 12 F: *a::h*
 13 Fe: *ten do- [where*
 14 F: *[ten [dollars ↑where*
 15 Re: *[ten ↑dollars*
 16 G: *(ten) dollars the machine*
 17 *i don't know it was second hand*
 18 Fe: *maybe in a garage sale*
 19 *you know they [do the garage*
 20 G: *[ye:s i don't know he went to work he saw it*
 21 F: *wo:w*
 22 Fe: *but it costs one hundred ninety-nine [something like this*
 23 G: *[but the ((pretending to turn*
 24 *a handle)) but not electric*
 25 F: *yes*
 26 G: *manual*
 27 F: *yes the manual one*
 28 Fe: *well you know here [that kind of things (are expensive)*
 29 F: *[the one where as a kid you turn the*
 30 *handle ((pretending to turn a handle with both hands))*
 31 *and mum puts the pasta through ((pretending to put a pasta*
 32 *sheet in the pasta machine))*
 33 G: *and and everybody (.) but but you know how to do them you know*
how (xxx)
 34 F: *[@*
 35 Fe: *[@*
 36 G: *i was forced to [help my ↑mum*
 37 F: *[i went out of my mind with boredom*
 38 Fe: *@*
 39 G: *Giada what are you doing today*
 40 Fe: *i have it written in my dna*
 41 G: *exactly*

In the conversation prior to line 01 of the extract above, Giada was talking about the *lasagne* she baked the day before, when they hosted a party in their share house. Fernando (lines 01-02) asks whether she bought the ready-made pasta sheets from the supermarket or she made it at home, and, to his and Fabio's surprise (lines 04-06), Giada answers that she made the pasta herself (line03).

In line 07, "gnegnè gnegnè gnegnè" she mimics the sound made by the pasta machine, as other participants promptly recognise (line 09). She then goes on recounting that the machine

was bought by her partner Tim for just ten dollars (line 11), causing the surprised reaction of others at such a small price (lines 13-15).

Lines 17-19 present some interesting linguistic features: Giada's turn "non lo so era seconda mano" (line 17), lacking the preposition *di* in front of the expression *seconda mano* which would be required in standard Italian, seems to be shaped on the English equivalent, 'it was second hand'. In lines 18-19, instead, Fernando uses the English expression "garage sale", a recurrent transfer in the corpus due to an 'objective lexical gap' (Bettoni 1983: 104), that is the lack of an Italian equivalent.

In line 22 Fernando points out that buying a pasta machine can be very expensive in Australia, reinforcing his point in line 28 "eh insomma sai qua quelle cose lì le paghi". The way he structures this turn is worth commenting on: he first refers to Australia with the adverb "qua", positioning it in a prominent topic position after the initial hesitations "eh insomma sai", then to the pasta machine with the expression "quelle cose lì", juxtaposed to "qua" to create a very strong opposition with the adverb of place. Moreover, "quelle cose lì" seems to refer not only to the pasta machine, but, more generally, to a category of things that, whereas very common in Italy, are considered niche products in Australia.

In the lines that follow interactants cooperate to construct their 'group identity' as Italian around the ability to use a pasta machine. Fabio's turn in lines 29-32, "quella dove tu da bambino giri la manovella e la mamma passa la pasta", echoes Giada's one in lines 23-24, not only because he repeats the same pronoun, "quella", to refer to the pasta machine, but also because he mimics the same gesture of operating one. However, Fabio adds a further point to the discussion: he presents the action of making home-made pasta as something that Italians learn very early in their lives. With his words and gestures, in fact, he evokes the image of a small child helping out their mother in the kitchen: children are usually assigned the 'fun' part (turning the handle), even though, as in Fabio's gesture, they are so small they have to use both hands, while mum puts the pasta sheets through the rollers of the machine.

Giada's turn in line 33, "e e tutti ma ma sai come farle sai come", has a key role in the identity work carried out in this extract: once again, participants' ethnic identity is constructed and reinforced by opposition to the one of 'others'. In line 33 Giada opposes to the image evoked by Fabio in the preceding lines the reactions that her being able to make pasta at home provoked in *everyone else*. As she does in extract 8 below, she refers to 'others' with the word "tutti", 'everyone', and, based on the context of interaction, it can be easily inferred that this expression refers to all her non-Italian, mostly Australian, in-law relatives, friends and housemates. Her use of this collective expression seems aimed at reinforcing the group identity constructed by interactants and at creating a contraposition between insiders and outsiders,

between the microcosm of the group of interactants, metaphorically representing the Italian community, and the surrounding Australian society.

These interactional dynamics are further confirmed in the following lines: other participants react with laughter to Giada's turn in line 33 or, rather, to the *voice* (Bakhtin 1981) of the *others* reported by her ("ma ma sai come farle"). She then goes on repeating the idea, expressed by Fabio in lines 29-32, that, in Italy, making pasta is something you learn as a child while you help, more or less willingly, your mother in the kitchen. Fernando also enters the conversation to provide his own support by saying that making pasta is in the Italian DNA.

Differently from extract 5 above, in which the DNA was referred to in a literal sense to comment on a supposed genetic abnormality of Australian men, DNA is here referred to figuratively as a synonym of one's ethnic identity.

Whereas commenting on the extract above I argued that participants constructed their 'group identity' as Italian on the ground of Giada's ability to use a pasta machine, I discuss now how ethnic identity can also be challenged based on food preferences.

(7) La pasta in bianco

'Pasta without sauces'

(D2: Fernando, Giada, Fabio & Researcher)

01 Fe: questo questo anche la mia coinquilina mi ha detto
02 quando una volta le ho detto
03 si può fare anche la pasta aglio e olio no
04 Re: a beh
05 Fe: ma come davvero ((reported speech))
06 F: @
07 Fe: la mia coinquilina è di hong kong
08 però lei ha- ha vissuto qua per quattro o cinque anni
09 Re: mmm
10 Fe: cioè mm è venuta a studiare quindi
11 diciamo che è abbastanza australianizzata
12 Re: hhh
13 Fe: quindi lei mi dice quando noi pensiamo alla pasta
14 noi pensiamo a un: ((moving hands in circles))
15 piatto di pasta con un condimento pazzesco
16 ((Re and F nodding))
17 quindi quando (xx xxx)
18 mangiate la pasta anche solo con: l'olio con in bianco
19 F: @
20 Fe: ho dovuto convincerla
21 Re: a me la pasta con l'olio il parmigiano
22 è una delle cose: ((shakes head)) che preferisco
23 Fe: sì è molto leg↑ge:ra e:
24 G: per dirti a me il parmigiano il grana
25 [sono troppo gustosi
26 Re: ((looking at G with surprise)) [non ti ↓piace
27 G: cioè un pochettino sì però no che dico uh il grana ahm
28 (7.1)
29 G: e tutti infatti (0.6) ma sei italiana?

30 @

01 Fe: *this this also my housemate told me*
 02 *when once i told her*
 03 *you can also make pasta with garlic and oil you know*
 04 Re: *oh well*
 05 Fe: *what really ((reported speech))*
 06 F: @
 07 Fe: *my housemate is from hong kong*
 08 *but she ha- has lived here for four or five years*
 09 Re: *mmm*
 10 Fe: *i mean mm she came to study so*
 11 *let's say she's fairly australianised*
 12 Re: @
 13 Fe: *so she tells me when we think of pasta*
 14 *we thinks of a: ((hand gesture))plate of pasta*
 15 *with a scrumptious ((hand gesture)) sauce*
 16 *((Re and F nodding))*
 17 *so when (xx xxx)*
 18 *you eat pasta also just with: oil with in bianco*
 19 F: @
 20 Fe: *i had to convince her*
 21 Re: *to me pasta with oil and parmesan*
 22 *is one of the things: ((shakes head)) i prefer*
 23 Fe: *yes it's very light: and:*
 24 G: *i tell you for me parmesan and grana*
 25 *[are too tasty*
 26 Re: *((looking at G with surprise)) [you don't like ↓ them*
 27 G: *i mean a little bit yes but not that i say oh grana yum*
 28 *(7.1)*
 29 G: *and everybody in fact (0.6) but are you italian?*
 30 @

Prior to these lines, Giada was talking about the fact that she does not like food that is very tasty or spicy. She reported the surprise of an Australian colleague at the fact that she was eating pasta 'in bianco', that is, without any sauces, just with olive oil. At this point Fernando steps in to tell others about his housemate, who also expressed her surprise at the same thing.

The way Fernando structures his turns is worthwhile commenting on. After an introduction to the topic (lines 01-03), he starts reporting the words of the housemate ("ma come davvero", line 05), marking the reported speech only with a change in his voice tone; before resuming the reported speech in lines 13-15, however, he inserts a couple of turns to make a necessary clarification: his housemate is from Hong Kong (line 07) but she has been living in Australia for "four or five years" (line 08), therefore she is fairly "australianizzata", 'Australianised' (line 11). This characterisation of the housemate seems to serve a double purpose in the conversation. Firstly, it is functional to the following turn (lines 13-15), in which Fernando uses the first person plural pronoun *noi*: without the turn in lines 10-11, it would be impossible to infer who the referent of the pronoun is, whereas thanks to line 11, "diciamo che è

abbastanza australianizzata”, it seems clear that, in Fernando's mind, the voice speaking in lines 13-15 is that of Australians, or of ‘Australianised’ people. Secondly, this said, the fact that Fernando positions his housemate as Australian also serves to align his narrative with the topic of the conversation, the contraposition between Italians and Australians with regards to eating ‘pasta in bianco’ and to take Giada’s side in the debate.

After Fernando’s narrative is concluded (line 20) I reinforce the point by saying that pasta with olive oil and parmesan is one of my favourite dishes (lines 21-22). Whereas Fernando expresses his agreement (line 23), Giada says that cheeses like parmesan are “troppo gustosi”, ‘too tasty’ for her (line 25), causing my surprised reaction in line 26. After a long pause (line 28), she then adds the turn in line 29, “e tutti infatti ma sei italiana”: the fact that she does not like tasty food like parmesan is considered by *others* to be incompatible with her Italian identity, so much so that she is often asked by ‘everyone’ whether she *is* Italian. Her use of *tutti* echoes line 33 of extract 6 and serves to mark the opposition between her identity as Italian and the Australian world by which she is surrounded being in a relationship with an Australian man. According to Giada’s experience, therefore, appreciating strong flavours and tasty food is considered by ‘others’, and Australians in particular, a category-bound attribute of the category ‘Italian’, and having different tastes, like hers, puts her at risk of being excluded from such category.

From another perspective, this also confirms the quote from Smolicz reported in Chapter II (p.60), in which Smolicz illustrates how the rejection of a supposed group core value, such as food for Italians, “carries with it the threat of exclusion from the group” (1981: 75).

Other aspects of the Italian-Australian opposition, and, in particular, the interplay between different categorisation devices, are made relevant in the following extract, in which participants are enjoying a dessert made by Amanda, a delicious homemade cake with fresh strawberries and custard.

(8) Le donne Italiane I

‘Italian women’

(D3: Ivo & Hannah, Amanda & Davide, Valeria, Fabio & Researcher)

01 I: ((looking at H and pointing at Am))
 02 vedi le donne italiane
 03 Am: ahahah e:h
 04 V: @
 05 Am: (x)
 06 V: ((pointing at Am)) LA [donna italiana
 07 D: [e beh scusa tu l'hai lasciata=
 08 F: =((gesture of throwing a dart))frecciatina¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ The word *frecciatina* stands here for the idiomatic expression *lanciare una frecciatina a/verso qualcuno*, meaning ‘to get a dig in at somebody’. Fabio is referring to Davide’s turn in line 06, in which

09 D: [@
 10 Re: [@
 11 F: [frecciatina
 12 D: ((looking at Hannah)) eh you (x)>he just left one<
 13 (2.2)
 14 H: i spend hours cooking for you
 15 Am: aah:
 16 H: and you say (.) yeah it's alright
 17 Re: no:
 18 V: ((looking at H, touching her on the arm
 19 and then pointing at I))italian man
 20 H: ((nodding and smiling)) eh:
 21 V: all of (them)
 22 Am: don't worry my husband
 23 D: [i do the same
 24 Am: [complains all the time
 25 and they ((pointing towards V)) know everyone knows
 26 H: oh- it- it's lucky my sister was there last night
 27 cause I I was trying new recipes
 28 ((nodding))I cooked three new things
 29 Re: aw
 30 F: mhhh-hhh
 31 H: for hours and my sister was
 32 ((shaking her head)) oh [sooo good=
 33 Re: @
 34 H: =[oh wow (x)
 35 Am: [yeah:
 36 H: and Ivo yeah it's alright
 37 Re: @
 38 H: ok ((nodding)) thanks
 39 Am: yeah [b-
 40 H: [but then((pointing at I))
 41 when he cooks
 42 Am: (hhh)((inhaling and moving her hand in front of her))
 43 H: (x) com'è com'è
 44 F: @
 45 H: do you like it do you like it
 46 F: @
 47 Am: yeah OH MY GO:D you remind me of SOMEONE
 48 ((turning her head towards D))
 49 @@

 01 I: ((looking at H and pointing at Am))
 02 you see italian women
 03 Am: ahahah eeeh
 04 V: @
 05 Am: (x)
 06 V: ((pointing at Am)) THE [italian woman
 07 D: [well you left one=
 08 F: =((gesture of throwing a dart)) gibe
 09 D: [@
 10 Re: [@
 11 F: [gibe
 12 D: ((looking at Hannah))eh you (x)>he just left one<

Davide comments on the fact that Ivo was previously in a relationship with an Italian woman but 'he left her' ("eh scusa tu l'hai lasciata").

((conversation continues in English))

The extract presents some interesting linguistic features due to the presence of an English speaker, Hannah, who, it is worth remembering, is in a relationship with Ivo and has a good understanding of Italian. Therefore in line 01, knowing that she would understand, Ivo uses Italian to address Hannah; his use of Italian, however, given the context of the interaction I illustrate below, may also serve another purpose. With his turn, Ivo is praising the talent of Italian women in the kitchen, jokingly creating an opposition with Australian women, represented here by Hannah. By using Italian, therefore, he is emphasising the effect of his joke, as he aligns with the other Italians at the table leaving Hannah 'isolated' not only interactionally, through the opposition with Italian women, but also linguistically.

In line 06, however, Valeria rejects Ivo's categorisation by repeating his words in the singular form ("la donna italiana"), to suggest that being a good cook cannot be considered an attribute of all Italian women, rather it is one of Amanda's personal qualities. In line 06 Davide makes a rather tactless joke referring to the fact that Ivo had previously been married to an Italian woman, and then, even more tactlessly, he translates it for Hannah in line 12.

The joke does not seem to be followed up by other participants, and in line 14, switching to English, Hannah starts her reply to Ivo's challenge. She defends her good will in the kitchen ("i spend hours cooking for you", line 14) and redirects the accusation at Ivo, by saying that it is his fault that he does not appreciate the food she cooks (line 16). Her counter attack receives the support of other women at the table, who cooperate to assign Italian men the image of ungrateful and picky partners when it comes to food. Valeria is very poignant in categorising Ivo as a typical "Italian man" (lines 18-19, 21) and Amanda also offers her solidarity to Hannah (lines 22, 24-25). Even Davide admits his faults, agreeing with Amanda that he is always complaining ("i do the same", line 23). In these turns participants are switching the focus from the categorisation device of ethnicity, made relevant by Ivo, to the one of gender: whereas Ivo tried to establish an opposition between Hannah and the "donne italiane" based on ethnic identity, Hanna, Valeria, Amanda and even Davide cooperate to turn the opposition into one based both on gender *and* on ethnicity, where Italian women are seen as 'victims' and Italian men as 'perpetrators' of 'culinary harassment'.

Having received support from other women, Hannah goes on to provide more evidence in defence of her cooking skills: the night before her sister witnessed the efforts she put into cooking dinner for Ivo (lines 26-28, 31-32), who, instead, did not show the enthusiasm she was expecting ("and Ivo yeah it's alright", line 36). She then turns the situation over and moves another accusation against Ivo: not only is he very picky when assessing her cooking, he is also very demanding when it comes to seeking approval for the food *he* cooks. She reports his speech

in Italian in line 43 (“com’è com’è”) and then in English in line 45 (“do you like it do you like it”), once again receiving the support of Amanda (in line 42 first and then in lines 47-48).

Therefore Ivo’s intention to criticise Australian women backfires against him as Hannah, Valeria and Amanda cooperate to turn it into an accusation against Italian men. Language also plays an important role in this exchange: I argued that Ivo’s turn in Italian in line 01 was aimed at ‘isolating’ Hannah from a linguistic as well as interactional point of view, but this try is also unsuccessful. In the end, in fact, Hannah herself uses Italian to report Ivo’s speech, thus defending her right to be part of the group and strengthening the tie with the Italian women at the table.

The episode, however, is not over yet. In fact, about seven minutes later, Hannah and Ivo start picking at each other again:

(9) Le donne italiane II

01 H: you eh you never eat dessert after dinner
[>sorry (x)<((to A))
02 Am: [really
03 I: >e vabbè ho capito ma è< una: cuoca italiana
04 Am: [co:me o::n
05 R: [@
06 H: [ah: ah
07 I: eh:
08 V: ma ba:sta poveretta questa cristiana
09 Am: come on H
10 I: cristiana non offendiamo
11 R: @@
12 H: ((shaking her head and moving her hand away from her))
13 Am: why d da don't you cook sweets [cakes and this kind
14 D: [I though that she
15 was saying that's your(x) hh
16 H: yes I ↑do
17 Am: but he sh- [he doesn't eat it
18 H: [but not often
19 no he does
20 I cook them only for him
21 Am: [ahh?
22 H: [because I never bake for myself
23 Am: yeah of ((nodding))
24 H: I make a mm some sweet rolls
25 that he takes into the field
and [keeps for a few weeks
26 I: [i'm leaving on monday
27 Re: @
28 V: ((to H)) do you know ↑that @
29 H: well considering how much you insulted my cooking
30 Re: @
31 Am: [yeah
32 H: [(x) maybe if you said some nice things
33 maybe I would make some for you
34 I: e da- l'amore va oltre ((hand gesture)) queste cose
35 Re: hhh

36 H: @

01 H: you eh you never eat dessert after dinner
02 [>sorry (x) < ((to A))

03 Am: [really

04 I: >c'mon i see but <it's an: italian cook

05 Am: [co:me o::n

06 R: [@

07 H: [ah: ah

08 I: eh:

09 V: enough: poor thing

10 Am: come on H

11 I: christian let's not be offensive

12 R: @@

13 H: ((shaking her head and moving her hand away from her))

14 Am: why d da don't you cook sweets [cakes and this kind

15 D: [I though that she

16 was saying that's your(x) hh

17 H: yes I ↑do

18 Am: but he sh- [he doesn't eat it

19 H: [but not often

20 no he does

21 I cook them only for him

22 Am: [ahh?

23 H: [because I never bake for myself

24 Am: yeah of ((nodding))

25 H: I make a mm some sweet rolls

26 that he takes into the field

27 and [keeps for a few weeks

28 I: [i'm leaving on monday

29 Re: @

30 V: ((to H)) do you know ↑that @

31 H: well considering how much you insulted my cooking

32 Re: @

33 Am: [yeah

34 H: [(x) maybe if you said some nice things

35 maybe I would make some for you

36 I: c'mon love goes beyond ((hand gesture)) these things

37 Re: ((giggles))

38 H: @

This time, buoyed by her success in the previous exchange, Hannah makes the first move and provokes Ivo, confident that, thanks to the support of other women, she will be able to withstand his reply. Everything seems to unfold as expected: Ivo's reply ("e vabbè ho capito ma è una cuoca italiana", line 05), comes quick and poignant as in extract 9, with a switch to Italian similar in its metaphorical meaning (Gumperz and Hymes 1972)) to the one in extract 9. Amanda and Valeria step in to support Hannah (line 05, 09, 10) and Hannah, asked by Amanda in line 14, once again defends her cooking- and baking – skills in line 12, "yes i do".

Compared to extract 9, however, this time the argument seems to have a smoother resolution: Ivo, using English for the first time in the lines analysed, even asks Hannah to bake

some sweets for him (line 28). His use of English here is antithetical to his use of Italian in his previous turns: whereas Italian was used to metaphorically ‘move away’ from Hannah, here he is ‘moving towards’ her and his turn represents a sort of *captatio benevolentiae* to regain her favour. Hannah therefore, can now afford to ‘play hard to get’ (“well considering how much you insulted my cooking”, line 31 and “maybe if you said some nice things/maybe I would make some for you” lines 34 and 35) and Ivo has to resort to humour to reach a positive conclusion of the episode (“l’amore va oltre queste cose”, line 36); his turn seems to sort the desired effect, as Hannah’s laughter in line 38 suggests that the ‘incident’ is successfully resolved.

Overall, I have argued that in extract 9 and in its follow up (extract 10), we see the failure of Ivo’s try to oppose Hannah, an ‘Australian woman’, to the category ‘donne italiane’ on the ground of her cooking skills: Hannah’s resented reaction and the solidarity of other women at the table contribute to reject Ivo’s move and, in fact, his attempt backfires at him. The women at the table switch the focus from ethnic to gender identity, and they cooperate to establish the category of ‘Italian men’ characterising it through the negative attributes of ungratefulness and ‘pickiness’.

The corpus presents other instances in which similar attempts at establishing a clear-cut Italian-Australian opposition are not successful, for example, the passage below.

(10a) L’aceto sull’insalata I

‘Vinegar on the salad’

(D5: Ivo & Hannah, Serena & Darren, Fabio & Researcher)

01 F: but nobody would understand in Australia
 02 because they don't eat salad with aceto so
 03 (.)
 04 H: really? who doesn't eat salad with aceto
 05 F: oh come on
 06 (.)
 07 F: [i remember
 08 Re: [(x)
 09 S: [all the people that can't digest the salad
 10 F: we had [we had ae:
 11 Re: [they have all the dressing
 12 F: in a dinner or
 13 we had a dinner with: our ((hand gesture))
 14 past neighbours
 15 Re: ex neighbours
 16 (1.2)
 17 F: ((putting on a sophisticated voice))
 18 previous neighbours (0.9) i'm sorry
 19 Da: previous awesome [(x) neighbours
 20 F: [whatever
 21 and and we just served salad with basically
 22 on the table olive oil salt and vinegar↑
 23 H: mm ↑mmm
 24 F: and they said oh:

25 so that's that's really italian salad
 26 because i think there was usually
 27 i know [dressing with:=
 28 Re: [dressing
 29 F: =i don't know sauces and all sort of stuff
 30 (1) so i think most most australians actually (.)
 31 dressed it with-
 32 H: i think most is a strong word↓ ((wagging her index
 33 finger up and down))
 34 F: many
 35 H: i think a lot of australians are not from england
 36 and that sounds like very english behaviour to me
 37 (.) cause that has [never happened in my household hhh
 38 I: [nel mio paese
 39 nel mio paese ((looking at H))
 40 H: mm?

In line 01, Fabio is referring to a Tuscan idiom that Ivo mentioned a few minutes before this conversation, *Una pisciata senza il peto è come un'insalata senza aceto*, 'A piss without a fart is like a salad without vinegar'. Fabio argues that nobody in Australia would understand the idiom, because "they don't eat salad with aceto" (line 02). Hannah reacts very promptly and with considerable surprise to Fabio's utterance ("really who doesn't eat salad with aceto", line 03), forcing Fabio to provide some sort of evidence to support his stance. This is why Fabio recounts the episode of our previous neighbours, who, on our serving salad dressed with just olive oil, salt and vinegar, labelled the dressing as "really italian" (line 25); Fabio then adds that he thinks they said this because, in Australia, salads are usually heavily dressed with many condiments and sauces. He is about to conclude his argumentation (see the use of the discourse marker 'so' in line 30) when Hannah steps in to criticise his use of the word 'most' ("i think most is a strong word", line 32), emphasising her words with a meaningful hand gesture (she wags her index finger up and down, lines 32 and 33).

Fabio seems to partly accept Hannah's criticism and produces the repair in line 34 "many", but Hannah goes on to explain why she thinks Fabio's words are misleading (line 35-37): she rejects the equation Australians-overdressed salad, attributing instead this feature to English food culture ("and that sounds like very english behaviour to me", line 36); she states very clearly (see emphasis in line 35, "i think a lot of australians are not from england ") that many Australians do not have an English background and goes on positioning herself and her family within this category by declaring that in her household they never use heavy dressing on their salad.

Hannah's overreaction to Fabio's statement seems to create a slight impasse among interactants and this is probably why Ivo steps in in line 38, attempting to steer the conversation away from the conflict. He introduces an Italian expression, *Nel mio paese nessuno è straniero*,

'In my country no one is a stranger'¹¹⁸, uttering only the first part of the sentence and eliciting a linguistic performance from Hannah to conclude the slogan¹¹⁹. After Hannah's confused reaction in line 40, in the lines that follow, not included in the transcript, the other participants struggle to find the link between the topic being discussed, salad dressing, and the expression mentioned by Ivo.

From an interactional identity point of view, it is clear that Fabio's attempt at establishing a simplistic opposition between Italians and Australians based on different tastes in salad dressing is rejected by Hannah, who, positioning herself as an insider of Australian culture, stresses the presence of different sub-categories within the broader category 'Australian'; the strong stance she takes against the identification of Australian culture with the British one represents a proud defence of Australia's own ethnic identity as a multicultural country which has grown out of its colonial past.

This stands in stark contrast with the frequent assimilation between Australian and British culture I discussed analysing extracts 2 and 4b above; it appears that, whereas from an outsider perspective, such as that of Italian migrants, Australian culture is perceived as very similar to British culture, an insider like Hannah is instead keen to foreground the contrast between the two nations.

The episode, however, is not over, and, in the conversation below, the other Australian at the table, Darren, steps in to radically contradict what Hannah just said.

(10b) L'aceto sull'insalata II

41 F: i said most australians have a very (.) i don't know
42 overdressed salad with sauces and stuff
43 Da: yeah
44 F: and you mentioned that most australians probably
45 most it's big word
46 because most australians are not english
47 H: mmh
48 F: many
49 i don't know
50 Da: well most of them do actually man
51 F: most [of it
52 Da: [most most of the salad is like:
53 it's just ((gesture of squeezing sauce))
54 crap
55 Re: mmh
56 S: mmh
57 F: oh: do they eat ↑salad

¹¹⁸ This is the slogan created by an Italian radio station, *Radio Popolare*, to promote a yearly event in support of ethnic minorities in Italy.

¹¹⁹ Ivo seems to love this kind of performance elicitation, as several times during recordings he tested Hannah's knowledge of Italian prompting her, as in the instance above, to conclude idioms, song lines, movie titles, etc. On the elicitation of linguistic performances and their significance for migrants' identity see also Fellin 2007.

58 that's that's
 59 S: ((raises her head and smiles nodding))
 60 Da: oh yeah
 61 F: i don't think (x) @
 62 Da: @
 63 they do but it's not-
 64 F: [@
 65 Da: [@

The transcript resumes in line 41, in which Fabio tries to explain the link between the expression used by Ivo in lines 38-39 above and the topic of salad dressing by providing a summary of the dispute between Hannah and him. In line 50, Darren, Serena’s Australian partner, steps in to contradict what Hannah had said and to take Fabio’s side by agreeing with him on the fact that Australians tend to overdress their salad. His turn is quite significant with regards to conversational positioning: firstly, he refers to Australians with the third person plural, “well most of them do actually man”, thus positioning himself *outside* this ethnic group and aligning with the Italian ‘side’ of the conversation. Moreover, most likely intentionally, he uses three times (lines 450 and 52) the word ‘most’, against which Hannah had argued before. I believe Darren did this on purpose because during dinner number 5, the only one with two Australian partners present, Hannah and Darren did not seem to get along very well, as they were constantly picking at each other in more or less explicit ways. Whereas this could well be a coincidence due to personal incompatibility between the two, I would argue that their shared situational identity (Zimmerman 1998) of Australian partners in an Italian-Australian couple put them somehow in competition, for example with regards to their proficiency in Italian or their degree of ‘Italianisation’. Instances of these *battibecchi*, ‘quarrels’ between the two are very numerous and potentially worthy of attention in their own right.

Fabio, buoyed by Darren’s newly found support, reiterates the concept (“most of it”, line 51), before asking sarcastically whether Australians eat any salad at all (“oh do they eat salad”, line 57). Serena and Darren show their agreement (lines 59-60) and, after Darren’s attempt at a clarification (“they do but it’s not”, line 63), the episode reaches a conclusion with Fabio and Darren’s synchronised laughter (lines 64-65). Although Hannah does not explicitly reply to Darren’s stance, in the conversation that follows extract 11a she mentions an Australian commercial which made fun of stereotypes about Australians, and in particular of Australians’ supposed love for meat, thus implicitly labelling Fabio’s and Darren’s remarks as cliché and stereotypical.

In the closing of this episode, therefore, thanks to Darren’s intervention, the initial contraposition between Italians and Australians is re-established: Fabio positions himself even more strongly as Italian through the jokes about Australians’ eating habits and Darren keenly

supports his point; their overlapping laughter in lines 60 and 61 marks Darren's successful alignment with Fabio and with the other Italians.

After the rather strong performance of Italian identity Fabio produced in the extracts above, the following conversation, which took place only a few minutes after extracts 10a and 10b, represents yet another confirmation of the ever-changing and context-related nature of interactional identities. The conversation leading to the episode is quite interesting and worth reporting as it shows participants' interest and involvement in the research:

(11a) The *Scopa* cards I¹²⁰

(D5: Ivo & Hannah, Serena & Darren, Fabio & Researcher)

01 H: so how's your Italian study gonna work out tonight
02 I: yeah that's what we were wondering
03 ((moving the finger between him and F))
04 F: yeah we were wondering
05 >what the fuck are you-< ((putting
06 on a strong Italian accent))
07 I: talking about
08 F: studying about
09 tonight ((putting on a strong Italian accent))
10 I: we are wasting our time or what
11 Re: no no no
12 H: when the *scopa* [cards come out=
13 Re: [it's not-
14 H: =that's when the language begins?
15 Re: mmm?
16 H: when the *scopa* cards come out
17 [that's when the language begins @
18 Re: [@

In dinner number five, which, as mentioned above, involved two Australian partners, conversation was carried out mainly in English, and this is why, in line 01, Hannah asks how my "Italian study" is "gonna work out". Ivo and Fabio admit to have the same worry (lines 02-09) and Ivo makes a joke asking whether the recordings are going to be of any use ("we are wasting our time or what", line 10). I reassure them that they are not wasting their time (line 11) and begin explaining that the study is not necessarily language related (line 13), but my turn overlaps with Hannah's in lines 12 and 14, so I interrupt my speech and ask her to repeat what she just said (line 15). By mentioning the "*scopa* cards" she is referring to the other dinner (dinner number 3) in which Ivo and she took part, when participants ended up playing cards late into the night (see Chapter VI, section 6.2.3).

In her turn in lines 16-17, in which she links playing cards to use of the Italian language, Hannah introduces the identification between playing cards and Italian ethnic identity which, as I discuss shortly, plays a crucial role in the following episode.

¹²⁰ *Scopa* is the name of a very popular Italian card game.

(11b) The Scopa cards II

19 Re: cause last time (0.6)
20 another girl (0.7) came and she brought cards
21 (1.5)
22 S: you don't have ↑cards=
23 F: =we're hopeless yeah
24 we should have some yeah
25 S: come on @
26 I: ((purse hand¹²¹)) cavolo di italia:n you ↑are
27 S: @
28 F: i'm not italian ((raising his shoulder))
29 I: ah [that's-
30 S: [eh: ma va [dai ((hand gesture))
31 D: [he's he's a pr
32 what do they ↑call
33 sand
34 F: SANDGROPERs
35 H: sandgroper
36 D: he's a sandgroper
37 Re: mmh

In the lines I omitted in between the two extracts above, participants discussed whether during dinner number 3 we played *scopa* or *briscola*, two Italian card games, and I asked Serena and Darren if they own a deck of cards, which they do. When the transcript resumes, I am explaining that the cards we used last time were brought by another participant, Valeria (lines 19 and 20), and Serena then asks with surprise if we do not own cards (line 22); Fabio admits, with a hint of shame, that we do not (“we are hopeless yeah /we should have some yeah”, lines 23 and 24), and Ivo and Serena react with surprise (lines 25 and 26). Ivo’s reply is particularly interesting, both from a linguistic and from an interactional point of view: his turn mixes Italian and English on a semantic and syntactic level, “cavolo di italian you are” but also from a prosodic and non-verbal perspective, as his intonation is typically Italian and so is the hand gesture that accompanies his words (purse hand).

With this turn, however, he is also making explicit the connection between playing, or, in this case, owning cards and Italian ethnic identity (see section 6.2.3 in Chapter VI; see also De Fina 2007b and 2007c); having a deck of cards and knowing how to play certain card games is thus considered a category-bound attribute of the category ‘Italian’ and, as I discussed commenting extract 7 with regards to food preferences, rejecting this feature puts you at risk of exclusion from the category.

The identity work carried out by participants in the lines that follow Ivo’s turn in line 26 is very ‘intense’ and somewhat ambiguous: in line 28 Fabio reacts to Ivo’s challenge to his

¹²¹Following the literature on Italian hand gestures (see bibliography in Kendon 1995) I use this expression to refer to the hand gesture in which “all the digits of the hand are held fully extended, but they are drawn together so that they are in contact with one another at their tips” (Kendon 1995: 249).

italianità by ironically denying his being Italian, “i’m not italian”; whereas Ivo seems to respond with humour, as his interrupted reply in line 29 is likely to stand for “ah that’s (true)”, in line 30, “eh ma va dai”, Serena disapproves Fabio’s rejection of his Italian identity, accompanying her words with a meaningful hand gesture (she raises her right hand and forearm and moves them backwards).

Fabio’s turn comes as a surprise in this context, as only a few minutes prior to this conversation he had positioned himself strongly as Italian (extracts 11a and 11b) and also because in this same extract (lines 23 and 24) he seems to agree with the fact that he and I, as Italians, should own a deck of cards. The explicit categorisation in Ivo’s turn in line 26 seems to be what triggers Fabio’s sarcastic rejection of his ethnic identity. From Fabio’s reply, however, it is not clear whether he is rejecting being Italian to position himself as Australian or to foreground his status of in-between, or ‘Italian migrant’; the former hypothesis appears more likely, as, in the context of the interaction, the logical, most intuitive alternative to ‘being Italian’ is probably ‘being Australian’.

In fact, this interpretation is supported by Darren’s turn in lines 31-33 and 36, in which he steps in to categorise Fabio as a ‘true local’, or ‘Sandgroper’, as Western Australians are derogatorily nicknamed. Darren’s turn suggests that he interpreted Fabio’s reply in line 28 as a performance of affiliation to his host country; interestingly, however, he does not ascribe Fabio to the broader category ‘Australian’, but to the more specific one of ‘Sandgroper’. Considering that Darren is not a ‘Sandgroper’ himself, as he is originally from New South Wales, and that during the dinner he expressed several times his dislike for Perth, this categorisation appears somewhat surprising. In fact, whereas Darren had the chance to strengthen the conversational alliance between Fabio and him they established in extract 11b by ascribing Fabio to the category ‘Australian’, he decides, on the one hand, to support Fabio’s positioning as non Italian but, on the other, to categorise him as a ‘Sandgroper’, a social group to which he is certainly not keen to claim affiliation.

Overall, the conversational dynamics analysed in extracts 11 and 12 showcase the nature of interactional identity as an ever-changing, fluid and context-related phenomenon, as well as the fickle and shifting character of positioning and conversational alliances.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I discussed the construction and negotiation of ethnic identities. In section 4.1, I argued that participants cooperated to build the stereotypical image of *homo australis* and that negative attributes are ascribed to it for the purpose of strengthening, by opposition, the ties between participants and fostering their ‘group identity’ as Italian. This is a common, often unconscious pattern in migratory contexts, in which the *host* country and its people can easily be

seen by migrants as *hostile*; moreover, the complex relation between migrants and their host country can represent a threat to migrants' ethnic identity and therefore elicit negative attitudes towards it as a way to defend one's sense of belonging.

The categories made relevant in section 4.1, however, often transcended the Italian and Australian ones, as participants established, for example, the oppositions between Australians and Europeans (extract 1) and between Italians and 'Anglo-Celtic' (extract 4). Overall, the mark that seems to categorise Australians better in the eyes of Italian migrants is that of 'isolation': participants often categorise Australians as isolated, both from a historical (extract 1) and from an environmental point of view (extracts 4b and 5b). Giada, who plays a key role in this characterisation, tries to put the ultimate seal on Australians' diversity by introducing a supposed genetic abnormality.

Her attempt, however, is not entirely successful, and neither is Vito's one at labelling Australians as *rozzi* (extract 3). The failure of several attempts at establishing a simplistic, clear-cut opposition between Italians and Australians is evident also in section 4.2. In this section we see a clear difference in the outcome of identity performances between extracts 6 and 7 and extracts 8, 9 and 10a; whereas in the first part of the section extracts are from Italian-only dinners and the negotiation of ethnic categories thus takes place *in absentia*, mainly through the use of reported speech, in the second one it happens *in presentia*, as Australians are present and active in the conversation. Whereas in the first part interactants successfully construct their Italian group identity by opposition to the *Other*, Australians, in the second part most identity projections are unsuccessful. This could be the result of the fact that many identity projections are made by participants, Italian or Australian, as *outsiders* of the ethnic group discussed and are therefore often based on sociocultural stereotypes (see extracts 9a, 10a and 10b, 11a). The other party in the conversation then contests the projection, as Hannah did several times in the extracts analysed, based on their *insider* knowledge.

Overall, however, participants did not seem to feel as strongly for this dichotomy between identity categories as they did for the ones analysed in the following chapters: this could suggest that their status of 'in-betweeners' is blurring the picture of their ethnic identity as they develop their transnational selves.

Chapter V

Old migrants, new migrants and real Italians: categories at play on a dynamic continuum

Introduction

After discussing the Italian-Australian contraposition in Chapter IV, I now narrow the focus to the community of Italian migrants in Australia and analyse the way participants positioned themselves and others within it, especially with regards to previous vintages of migrants. Instances of talk about the Italian-Australian community are very abundant in the corpus and participants, as new migrants, expressed their distance from such a group on many occasions during recordings; in fact, the discursive construction of the opposition between old and new migrants is one of the features that recurred most often in the conversations.

This opposition, however, does not suffice to fully explain the dynamics created by participants in the conversations: in the interplay between the categories of new and old migrant another category was made relevant, that of 'real Italian' (Sala et al. 2010). From the analysis of the interactions, it seems that participants deployed the category of 'real Italian' to refer to someone who can be seen as 'expert' about Italy in general, about *italianità* or more specifically about the Italian language. Such category seems to be performed, or projected, regardless of whether the person lives in Italy or is an Italian migrant in Australia.

The interplay between these three main identity categories¹²² is complex and, further demonstrating the shifting and locally originated nature of interactional identities, it is intrinsically connected to the dynamics of the single interaction: so much so that, for example, despite the relevance of the old migrant - new migrant opposition, the corpus also presents instances of talk where the gap between the two categories seems to be, if not filled, at least narrowed considerably. For this reason, at the end of each of the two sections that compose this chapter, I analyse extracts of conversation in which participants either perform linguistic behaviours typical of old migrants (see section 5.1.2 below), or give up their role of 'real Italians' to accept the identity of 'Italian migrant' (see section 5.2.2 below).

The chapter is divided into two parts: I begin the analysis with a section in which participants discursively construct the old migrant-new migrant opposition, showing their awareness of belonging to an altogether different phenomenon. This section is further subdivided into subsections that analyse the different ways in which this opposition is made relevant in conversation, for example through the foregrounding of the linguistic differences

¹²² As I discuss analysing extract 20, a fourth category was made relevant in some of the interactions, that of 'Italian migrant' as opposed to 'real Italian'.

between the two cohorts of migrants. The second section of the chapter is specifically devoted to the analysis of identity performance in interaction, and in particular to the interplay between the identity categories mentioned above.

5.1. *Ieri e oggi*¹²³: the discursive construction of the old migrant-new migrant opposition

In the following section I present extracts of talk in which participants discursively construct the opposition between their migration vintage and the post-war one. The awareness shown by them of belonging to a new, different phenomenon is one of the most salient traits to emerge from the analysis and, I would argue, something that accounts for the necessity and meaningfulness of a study about new Italian migration to Australia.

As discussed in Chapter II, the thirty years between the end of mass-migration and the first arrivals of new migrants profoundly changed the world in which migrants live and, ultimately, the migration experience itself. In the following extract, for example, participants show their surprise and even disbelief when one of them tells the story of an old migrant who arrived in Australia 'by mistake'. In this extract participants take a distance from the category of old migrants mainly through the means of laughter and the use of personal pronouns.

(1) Fremantle or America?

(D3: Ivo, Amanda & Davide, Valeria, Fabio & Researcher)

01 I: no comunque c'è il mio: c'e' il mio collega napoletano
 02 Am: [mmh mh
 03 D: [mh
 04 I: che ha ora settant'anni ma lui
 05 F: ah coso: lo m:
 06 I: franco
 07 F: franco
 08 Re: ah sì
 09 I: ma lui è via dall'italia da quando aveva vent'anni
 10 [>(in)so(mma)¹²⁴ quindi<
 11 Am: [mm
 12 I: quindi già con lui è un capitolo parlare con lui
 13 perché ti racconta un'italia di cinquant'anni fa
 14 D: [eh sì
 15 F: [@
 16 A: [sì
 17 quell'italia fossilizzata=
 18 D: =loro pensano che l'italia sia rimasta [così
 19 Am: [così((nods))

¹²³ 'Yesterday and today'.

¹²⁴ Even though interpretation here is not clear, "so" could be an English transfer in Ivo's speech. If this was the case, the transfer would represent a false start followed by a self repair with the switch to Italian "quindi".

20 I: =no no lui lo sa >che è diversa< però insomma (1.2)
 21 e:: comunque è già un capitolo interessante quello (1)
 22 poi lui c'è il suo vicino,
 23 Am: mmh mh
 24 I: che è immigrato qui e lui il suo vicino c'ha tipo
 25 ottantacinque anni [così=
 26 Am: [ah:
 27 I: =immigrato qui (.) appena dopo la guerra ↑no
 28 dalla sicilia e::
 29 e sto tipo (x) se lui ti racconta la sua storia
 30 sto tipo qui (.) voleva andare in america
 31 Am: eh
 32 (x) (xxx)
 33 I: è arrivato a fremantle e pensava di essere in america
 34 ((general laughter))
 35 D: LA BARCA SBAGLIATA NO:
 36 V: dai ma non è vera questa cosa
 37 Am: ((nods)) sì sì
 38 F: inglese parla- no ma non è la prima volta che la sento
 39 (x) (xx)
 40 I: però insomma cioè: adesso qua a ogni ora
 41 puoi sapere che temperatura c'è hai capito
 42 Am: eh
 43 I: a ferrara ventiquattro e cinque [oggi @
 44 Re: [mmh:
 45 F: esatto tu sei a ventimila chilometri di distanza
 46 I: lui non sapeva neanche in che continente andava @
 47 V: arrivava ↑dov'è new york
 48 I: capito
 49 V: pensa te,
 50 Am: ((shakes her head)) no guarda che ti raccon-
 51 ti dicono ti raccontano delle sto:rie
 52 io certe volte:((shakes her head))

01 I: *no anyway there is my: there is my Neapolitan colleague*
 02 Am: *[mmh mh*
 03 D: *[mh*
 04 I: *who is now seventy but he*
 05 F: *oh the guy: the m:*
 06 I: *franco*
 07 F: *franco*
 08 Re: *oh yeah*
 09 I: *but he has been away from italy since he was twenty*
 10 *[> (so) therefore<*
 11 Am: *[mm*
 12 I: *so with him already is a chapter speaking with him*
 13 *because he tells you about an Italy fifty years old*
 14 D: *[yes*
 15 F: *[@*
 16 A: *[yes*
 17 *that italy fossilised =*
 18 D: *=they think italy is still like [that*
 19 Am: *[like that ((nods))*
 20 I: *=no no he knows >that it's different< but anyway (..) a::nd*
 21 *anyway that's already an interesting chapter (.)*
 22 *then he there's his neighbour,*

23 Am: *mhm mh*
 24 I: *who migrated here and he his neighbour is like*
 25 *eighty five [so=*
 26 Am: *[oh:*
 27 I: *=migrated here (.)just after the war, you ↑know*
 28 *from sicily and::*
 29 I: *and this guy (x) if he tells you his story*
 30 *this guy here (.) wanted to go to america*
 31 Am: *eh*
 32 (x) *(xxx)*
 33 I: *he arrived in fremantle and he thought he was in america*
 34 *((general laughter))*
 35 D: *THE WRONG BOAT NO:*
 36 V: *come on this thing is not true*
 37 Am: *((nods)) yes yes*
 38 F: *they speak engli- no but this is not the first time I hear this*
 39 (x) *(xx)*
 40 I: *but anyway ((gesture)) I mean: now here at any time*
 41 *you can find out what's the temperature you know*
 42 Am: *eh*
 43 I: *in ferrara it's twenty four point five [today @*
 44 Re: *[mh:*
 45 F: *exactly you are twenty thousand kilometres away*
 46 I: *he didn't even know what continent he was going to @*
 47 V: *he would arrive ↑where's new york*
 48 I: *you know*
 49 V: *can you imagine,*
 50 Am: *((shakes her head)) no look they narr-*
 51 *they tell they narrate some stories*
 52 *i sometimes: ((shakes her head))*

Participants were previously talking about the movie *Bello, onesto emigrato Australia sposerebbe compaesana illibata*¹²⁵ and making comparisons between the situation back then and the contemporary world. In line 01 Ivo begins a narrative about an old immigrant: at first, the narrative seems to be about a colleague of his, Franco, whom Fabio and I have met before (see lines 5-8), but in line 11 we can start to infer that he is going to introduce another character, when he says “già con lui”, ‘with him already’. His narrative however is temporarily interrupted by other participants who comment on the view old migrants hold of contemporary Italy. In line 18 Davide implicitly refers to old migrants with the third person plural pronoun *loro*, thus setting the scene for the opposition between the categories of old and new migrant. Ivo’s narrative resumes in line 21 “comunque è già un capitolo interessante quello”, and, in line 22, the real protagonist of the story is introduced, Ivo’s colleague’s eighty-five-year-old Sicilian¹²⁶ neighbour. He is introduced as belonging to the post-war mass migration wave of migrants (line 27) and,

¹²⁵ The movie (1971), by director Luigi Zampa, tells the story of a post-war Italian migrant in Australia who looks for a woman willing to come to Australia to marry him.

¹²⁶ It is interesting to note that both characters in Ivo’s narrative are regionally characterised: Franco is “il mio collega napoletano” (line 01), and the old migrant “immigrato [...] dalla sicilia” (lines 27-28). Regional characterisation is a very recurrent trait in the corpus (see Chapter VI).

according to Ivo's narrative, he left Italy thinking that he was going to America. Although this is certainly not a *unicum* in the history of Italian migration to Australia, it nowadays seems unthinkable, so much so that Valeria can not believe the story is true ("dai ma non è vera questa cosa", line 36). Other participants react in different ways: there is general laughter (line 34), Davide makes a joke ("la barca sbagliata", line 35), while Amanda and Fabio support Ivo's narrative confirming that the story is true (line 36) and that they have heard similar experiences (line 38).

After the narrative is concluded, Ivo's comment in lines 40, 41 and 43 makes its relevance to the conversation clear: whereas seventy years ago one could arrive in Fremantle not knowing one was in Australia, today, the Internet provides us with an altogether different level of awareness and information, to the point that one can even know what the temperature is in an Italian city in this precise moment ("a ferrara ventiquattro e cinque oggi", line 43). Fabio's comment in line 45 supports Ivo's observation and suggests that, thanks to technology, distances are somewhat virtually shortened. Ivo's turn in lines 46 (concluded in line 48) acts as a closing for this episode, reiterating the opposition between old migrants and the contemporary world.

Amanda, who has been very responsive to Ivo's turns throughout the narrative (see her *response cries* in lines 2, 11, 23, 26, 31, 43 and the even stronger display of support in line 37 "sì sì"), in lines 50-52 gives her final validation of Ivo's story. Through the strong opposition between old migrants, the implicit subject of the verb in the third person plural "ti raccontano", and the "io" (line 51), she expresses her disbelief towards the stories that older Italian migrants can come up with, finishing the sentence with a meaningful shake of her head to further reinforce her words.

A recurrent means used by participants to discursively construct the opposition between them and old migrants is the deployment of linguistic markers, such as past verbal tenses, adverbs of time or other temporal expressions, to create the effect of a bygone era and mark the distance to the present. In the next extract, for example, the expressions "una volta", 'back then', and "tanti anni fa", 'many years ago', are opposed to "adesso", 'now', and "oggi", 'today'.

(2) La dogana

'Custom'

(D4: Valeria, Fernando, Roberto, Antonio, Fabio & Researcher)

01 V: secondo me secondo me
 02 se le appioppiano [a volte le cose
 03 Fe: [no: no
 04 R: [no
 05 F: [no qui no

06 A: non siamo mica a malpensa
07 F: a malpensa no a malpensa @
08 ((general laughter))
09 F: ci sono i banchetti no,
10 ((general laughter))
11 R: forse no una volta lo facevano tanti anni fa
12 V: perché dici una volta adesso no
13 R: perché lo so perché i miei venivano
14 e conoscevano persone
15 V: @
16 R: si tenevano tutti sti sala:mi(.)
17 R: [una volta (x)
18 Re: [italiani
19 R: tutti gli italiani veramente portavano le:
20 le olive l'olio
21 Re: @
22 R: sequestravano tutto (.) e se-
23 non li buttavano ((shakes head))
24 F: le melanzane [sottaceto
25 R: [se le mangiavano loro
26 V: è
27 Re: bè menomale=
28 R: =però oggi: oggi non è più così
29 V: glielo direi cavoli
30 piuttosto che buttarle [mangiatele
31 R: [oggi oggi non è così

01 V: *I think I think*
02 *they keep [the things sometimes*
03 Fe: *[no: no*
04 R: *[no*
05 F: *[no not here*
06 A: *it's not like at malpensa*
07 F: *at malpensa no at malpensa @*
08 *((general laughter))*
09 F: *they have banquets you know,*
10 *((general laughter))*
11 R: *maybe no back then they would do it many years ago*
12 V: *why do you say one time not now=*
13 R: *=because I know it because my parents used to come*
14 *and they knew people*
15 V: *@*
16 R: *they would keep all these salami (.) and th-*
17 R: *[one time (x)*
18 Re: *[italians*
19 R: *all the italians would really bring the:*
20 *the olives the oil*
21 Re: *@*
22 R: *they would confiscate everything and they w-*
23 *they wouldn't throw them away ((shakes head))*
24 F: *pickled [eggplants*
25 R: *[they would eat them themselves*
26 V: *yeah*
27 Re: *well that's alright=*
28 R: *=but toda:y today it's not like that anymore*
29 V: *i would tell them*

(3a) Chain migration I

(D3: Amanda & Davide, Fabio)

01 D: perché poi cioè lo sapete come funzionava (x) prima e:
02 uno partiva arrivava in un posto
03 poi chiamava tutti quelli del paese
04 F: esatto @
05 D: alla fine c'era un paese (.) tipo: (0.7)
06 Am: trapiantato
07 D: [eh
08 F: [trapiantato sì

01 D: *because then I mean you know how it worked (x) before a:nd*
02 *one would leave would arrive in one place*
03 *then he would call everyone from his hometown*
04 F: *that's right @*
05 D: *in the end there was a town (.) like: (0.7)*
06 Am: *transplanted*
07 D: *[yeah*
08 F: *[transplanted yeah*

In the lines above, the expression “prima” (line 01), together with the use of the *imperfetto* tense, function as markers of the fact that Davide is describing the phenomenon of chain migration as something that belongs to the past. Exactly the same combination is repeated shortly after.

(3b) Chain migration II

(D3: Amanda & Davide, Ivo & Hannah, Valeria, Researcher)

01 Am: anche ↓perché
02 parecchi mi sa per arrivare qua coi visti
03 facevano l'atto di richi- facevano sp-
04 [sponsorizzavano il
05 D: [ah è ve:ro
06 Re: (x)
07 Am: fr- chiamavano i fratelli=
08 D: =è ve:ro [perché prima così fac- funzionava
09 Am: [non potevi venire così
10 V: e poi [(x)
11 D: [che tu da qui potevi man-
12 volevi chiamare qualcuno [dall'australia
13 Am: [qualcuno eh
14 I: abbiamo appena visto il film
15 D: dall'italia
16 V: [belli:ssimo
17 I: [gliel'ho fatto vedere
18 V: do you like it?

01 Am: *also ↓because*

02 *many I think to arrive here with a visa*
 03 *would do the atto di rich- they would make a sp*
 04 *[would sponsor the br-*
 05 D: *[oh that's true*
 06 Re: *(x)*
 07 Am: *br- they would call the brothers=*
 08 D: *=that's true: [because that's how they d- how it worked before*
 09 Am: *[you couldn't just come like that*
 10 V: *and then [(x)*
 11 D: *[that from here you could sen-*
 12 *you wanted to call someone [from australia*
 13 Am: *[someone yeah*
 14 I: *we just watched the movie*
 15 D: *from Italy*
 16 V: *[so: good*
 17 I: *[I made her watch it*
 18 V: *do you like it?*

In lines 01-03 and 07 Amanda is referring to the 'atto di chiamata', the official document that Italian migrants had to submit in order to apply for a visa for a relative (Castles 1992). However, the exact name of the document seems to escape her (see her attempt in line 03 followed by two self-initiated repairs in lines 03 and 04 and yet another repair in line 07) and has to resort to a very general description of the process (line 07). Davide shows his support to Amanda and at the same time defends his own role of expert on the topic (see extract 3a above) by endorsing what Amanda is saying ("è vero", lines 05 and 08) and by using an expression very similar to the one he used before ("prima così fac- funzionava" line 08; see line 01 of the previous extract "lo sapete come funzionava prima"). Once again, the use of the imperfect tense together with the adverb "prima", 'before', logically linked to an implicit *after*, underlines the contrast with the present situation, in which Italian migrants no longer practise chain migration.

In line 14 Ivo enters the conversation introducing a new topic, closely related to the one discussed: he has recently shown Hannah, his Australian partner, the movie *Bello, onesto emigrato Australia sposerebbe compaesana illibata* (see p.134) in which chain migration and, as I discuss shortly, proxy marriages, play a very important role. The discussion that follows presents several points of interest, including other discursive devices, such as laughter, deployed by participants to highlight the old migrant-new migrant opposition.

In line 18 of the extract above, Valeria asks Hannah whether she enjoyed watching the movie and the conversation, not included in the transcript, goes on with Hannah explaining that she did not like it. A few turns later, where the next extract begins, Davide argues, in English as Hanna is also part of the conversation, that the movie is very realistic:

(4) Proxy marriages

(D3: Amanda & Davide, Ivo & Hannah, Valeria, Fabio & Researcher)

01 D: because you see the: e: you watch that movie (.)
02 and then you see all these people (.) italian p-@
03 Am: yeah
04 D: yeah [and you say@
05 V: [and you say (.)that's it
06 D: you can tell you can tell yes
07 Re: @
08 D: @
09 (1.6)
10 H: the story seemed (.) reasonably rea[listic=
11 D: [yes
12 H: =but yeah they're still annoying @
13 D: that's that's what happen (0.8)
14 nowadays with the indians they @
15 H: [yep well
16 F: [((nods))
17 Re: si portano:
18 D: they just get the: [the wife from
19 I: [la scena quando: ((hand gesture))
20 la scena dell'aeroporto per me è ((hand gesture))

01 D: because you see the: e: you watch that movie (.)
02 and then you see all these people italian p-@
03 Am: yeah
04 D: yeah [and you say @
05 V: [and you say (.)that's it
06 D: you can tell you can tell yes
07 Re: @
08 D: @
09 (1.6)
10 H: the story seemed (.) reasonably rea[listic=
11 D: [yes
12 H: =but yeah they're still annoying @
13 D: that's that's what happen (0.8)
14 nowadays with the indians they @
15 H: [yep well
16 F: [((hand gesture))
17 Re: they bring:
18 D: they just get the: [the wife from
19 I: [the scene whe:n ((hand gesture))
20 the scene at the airport for me is ((hand gesture))

According to Davide (lines 01-02, 04 and 06) the movie offers a very realistic picture of the lives of Italian migrants in the post-war era; the general meaning of his turn is that after watching the movie, when you meet old Italian migrants in Australia you realise that what the movie shows is very close to reality. His turn, however, is very fragmented due to his frequent laughter and to the overlapping with the turns by Amanda (line 03) and Valeria (line 05), who enter the conversation to back up Davide's stance. Line 02 is left unfinished as Davide starts laughing, and

so seems to be line 06, which is followed by my and Davide's laughter. We thus have to infer the exact meaning of the expression in line 06, "you can tell yes", even though, given the context, the interpretation proposed above, that the movie is very realistic, seems to be the only logical one.

After a couple of turns by Hannah, in which she agrees that the movie is quite realistic (line 10), Davide makes another interesting point: according to him, what used to happen with Italian migrants is now happening with other ethnic groups, particularly Indians. From what he says in line 13 we can only infer that he is referring to chain migration, but his turn in line 18 makes it clear that he is referring more specifically to proxy marriages. Ivo shows a correct understanding of Davide's reference to proxy marriages by citing a scene of the movie, "la scena dell'aeroporto" (line 20), in which Italian women arrive in Australia and try to identify their future husbands by comparing the photos they had been given to the men waiting at the airport. Although line 20 is incomplete, we can easily infer from Ivo's hand gesture (open hands in front of him, facing forward and moving from the inside to the outside) that he considers that scene one of the best of the movie.

In this extract, laughter is one of the means that speakers use to construct the opposition to old migrants. In line 02, for instance, Davide refers to this category as "all these people" and then adds "italian p-", which most likely stands for 'Italian people' but is interrupted by laughter. Through this expression, which could even be perceived as derogatory, and through the laughter at the end of his turn, he shows quite a strong detachment from the category of old migrants. The same detachment is performed in the first part of line 02 "and then you see all these people", where Davide positions himself as one of the 'observers' of old Italian migrants and certainly not as one of them.

Moreover, the parallel between historic Italian migration and contemporary Indian migration to Australia created by Davide in line 13 once again stresses the detachment that new Italian migrants feel towards prior cohorts of migrants: in Davide's view, practices such as proxy marriages or chain migration do not belong to Italians any more and, rather, he links them to other ethnic groups. The fact that Davide mentions India, a developing country, also suggests that such practices are perceived as somewhat archaic and even laughable (line 13) from the perspective of contemporary Italians.

5.1.1 'Talking' the difference: language as a category marker

In the instances presented above, I have discussed how new Italian migrants discursively constructed the opposition between them and old migrants with regards to different aspects linked to the migration experience. Another contrast between the two categories that was made

relevant by participants in several occasions is the difference in language use: be it dialect or popular Italian, old migrants speak a language that sounds alien to the ears of a contemporary Italian migrant, so much so that understanding between the two categories can often become problematic (extracts 5 and 6).

As discussed in Chapter II, the linguistic practices of old migrants have been extensively studied from the 1980s onwards. Their widespread use of transfers, code switching and code mixing, to cite just the most common phenomena, is well documented in the literature. No studies have yet been published, instead, on the language of new Italian migrants, as this wave of Italian migration only acquired real significance in the last five years or so. The corpus I collected for my research offers several points of interest for a linguistic analysis and could well serve as a starting point for a comparison between the languages of different cohorts of migrants. This, however, goes beyond the scope of this work and could be the object of further research.

Here I explore how linguistic features and differences in language use play a role in the discursive construction of the categories of old and new migrant. In the following pages I discuss three main areas of linguistic use that participants made relevant with regards to the characterisation of the language of old migrants: the use of dialect, transference and code mixing. The reference to the 'archaic' variety of dialect spoken by old migrants and the widespread use of transfers, in particular, were the elements deployed more often by participants to construct the opposition between new and old migrants.

5.1.1.1 The dialect of old migrants

Although many times during recordings participants pointed out that they still use dialect with their family and friends (see Chapter VI), thus suggesting that Italian dialects are still alive and well in contemporary Italy, they also commented extensively on the variety of dialect spoken by old Italian migrants in Australia.

The following extract, which begins with a meta-comment on the research, illustrates how the linguistic gap between old and new migrants can be so wide as to hinder understanding between them.

(5) "Quelli vecchi"

'The old ones'

(D3: Amanda & Davide, Ivo, Valeria, Fabio & Researcher)

01 Am: no te l'ho detto tu portati sta telecamera ((points
02 to the camera)) (.) [dove lavoro io

03 Re: [@ al club (.) no al:
04 D: è vero al patronato ma:: ((shakes head))
05 Am: là ci stanno tutte le gen- ci stanno i nonni
06 nonni nipoti e figli tre generazioni
07 R: wow
08 Am: ((shakes head)) eh:@
09 una volta un signore mi parlava-
10 parlavano in inglese e °(xx) °
11 poi parlava non parlava italiano parlava siciliano
12 Re: mmh
13 Am: era non so se era meglio se parlava in inglese
14 o se parlava: [siciliano=
15 Re: [@
16 Am: =°cioè (x)se parlava inglese lo capivo di più°
17 Re: @
18 V: sì è vero perché (.)quelli ↑vecchi parlano dialetto,
19 D: stretto stretto proprio
20 (x) (xx)
21 I: l'italiano si parlava solo nelle grandi città=
22 V: =ma anche il dialetto cioè si è mo- si è si è evoluto
23 Am: sì:
24 Re: e loro invece son rimasti
25 I: il dialetto sai non è scritto si perde
26 Am: loro gli è arriva=
27 D: =((to Valeria))ti ricordi erava-
28 quando siamo stati a: (1.2)
29 a coso lì quel posto a:(1)a ravensthorpe
30 F: ravensthorpe
31 Am: ((looking and smiling at F)) [ravensthorpe¹²⁸
32 D: [che abbiamo trovato
33 que quel signore che dice:
34 calabrese che: che parlava che parlava dice
35 ah allora parliamo un po' italiano
36 e lui parlava un calabrese >di settant'anni fa<

01 Am: *no I told you you bring this camera ((points to the*
02 *camera)) (.) [where i work ((gesture))*
03 Re: *[@ to the club (.) no to the:*
04 D: *that's right to the patronato gee:: ((shakes head))*
05 Am: *there you have all the gen- there are the grandparents*
06 *grandparents grandchildren and grand-grandchildren three generations*
07 Re: *wow*
08 Am: *((shakes head)) eh: @*
09 *one time a man was talking to me-*
10 *they were talking in english and °(xx) °*
11 *then he spoke he didn't speak italian he spoke sicilian*
12 Re: *[mm*
13 Am: *it was i don't know if it was better if he spoke in english*
14 *or if he spoke: [sicilian*
15 Re: *[@*
16 Am: *°i mean (x) if he spoke english I'd have understood him more°*
17 Re: *@*
18 V: *yeah that's true because (.) the old ↑ones, they speak dialect,*

¹²⁸ Whereas Davide (line 29) pronounces the word 'Ravensthorpe' as [raven'stɔrp], in the following line Fabio proposes the pronunciation [reiven'stɔrp] and in line 31 Amanda jokingly echoes Fabio's words.

19 D: really really broad
 20 (x) xx
 21 I: Italian was spoken only in big cities=
 22 V: =but dialect also i mean has chan- has evolved
 23 Am: yeah:
 24 R: whereas they stayed
 25 I: dialect you know is not written it gets lost
 26 Am: they have been handed down -=
 27 D: =you remember we wer-
 28 when we went to: (1.2)
 29 to the thing there that place to: (1) to ravensthorpe
 30 F: ravensthorpe
 31 Am: ((looking and smiling at F)) [ravensthorpe
 32 D: [that we found
 33 th that man who goes:
 34 calabrese who: who spoke who spoke he goes
 35 let's speak Italian a little bit
 36 and he spoke in a calabrese dialect from seventy years ago

In the conversation before the beginning of the extract, I had been talking about how interesting the presence of Tony, a second-generation migrant, turned out to be during the first dinner (see extract 18). In line 01 Amanda expands on this topic, suggesting that I should take my video camera to her workplace, the “patronato” (line 04), an Italian-Australian welfare institution. She argues that the *patronato* would be an interesting place for my research because there I would find all the three generations of Italian migrants (lines 05 and 06).

In line 09, “una volta un signore [...]” she begins a narrative about the difficulties she once had in understanding a man who was speaking to her in Sicilian dialect: in line 09 she says that, at first, the man (or men, since the verb becomes plural in the repair “parlavano”, line 10) was using English but then switched to Sicilian “poi parlava non parlava italiano parlava siciliano” (line 11). Here is where Amanda started having troubles understanding the man, “cioè se parlava inglese lo capivo di più” (line 16). At this point, other participants enter the conversation to support Amanda’s narrative about old migrants’ use of dialect and the topic is discussed at length in the following minutes.

Amanda’s comment on the man’s use of both languages, English and Sicilian, is a reference to the extended use of code switching among the Italian-Australian community: more specifically, I would argue, the change in number of the verb in lines 09 and 10 (from the singular “parlava” to the plural “parlavano”) may suggest that *they*, old Italian migrants, were using English when talking among themselves and then the man switched to Sicilian when talking to Amanda (the verb goes back to the third person singular “parlava” in line 11). This is a fairly common pattern among the community of old migrants: whereas they would, at times, use English among themselves, especially with people from different Italian regions, they are very keen to present themselves as Italian when they meet Italian tourists or new Italian migrants,

with whom they tend to speak in the most prestigious Italian variety in their repertoire (Bettoni and Rubino 1996; Ciliberti 2007).

This behaviour, however, as in the episode narrated by Amanda, can actually lead to the opposite result: the man's performance of *italianità* is not successful, as Amanda does not perceive his language as Italian but as Sicilian and struggles to understand it. The communication breakdown between Amanda and the Sicilian man marks the distance between the two categories to which they belong; Amanda and the man have so little in common, when it comes to Italian language, that the communication between the two would have been more successful if carried out in English (line 16).

At this point in the narrative, Valeria enters the conversation to first support what Amanda just said and then add a comment on the variety spoken by old migrants. The significance of her turn lies in the category marker she uses, "quelli vecchi" (line 18). The expression holds a very strong position in the turn, being preceded by a short pause and having a rising intonation. Valeria's use of the adjective *vecchi*, 'old', is slightly ambiguous: it may refer to the age of old migrants, as opposed to the *younger* new ones, to the category itself of 'old' migrants, as opposed to that of new ones, or, as I consider more likely, it could bear both meanings at the same time. In any case, it is quite a strong categorisation on behalf of Valeria, who thus makes explicit the opposition between that group of people and the one to which the persons sitting at the table belong.

The difference between the two categories is identified not just in the use of dialect but in that of a specific, very broad and archaic variety of it. In fact, the intonation in Valeria's turn in line 18 suggests that she is about to add something, but she is interrupted by Davide (line 19) who qualifies the variety of dialect spoken by "quelli vecchi" as "stretto stretto proprio", *really really broad*. In line 21 Ivo plays the role of expert on the topic and also provides some sort of excuse to old migrants for their use of dialect by saying that, back then, Italian was only used in big cities "l'italiano si parlava solo nelle grandi città", whereas most historical migrants came from small country towns. Valeria's turn in line 22, starting with a mark of opposition "ma", suggests that she understands Ivo's point but what she means is that the variety of dialect spoken by old migrants is different from the one spoken nowadays in the same Italian region or town. Amanda gives her support to Valeria in line 23, while her turn in line 26, together with my turn in line 24 highlight the idea of the 'time warp' that old migrants live in. Line 26, in particular, may be interpreted as referring specifically to second and third-generation migrants, as the verb "gli è arrivato" gives the idea of something they have 'received', that they have been 'handed down' by their parents or grandparents. Ivo's turn (line 26) is in line with his previous turn (line 21), as he continues to perform the identity of 'expert' on the topic. This time he ascribes the

increased subjectivity of dialect to change and to attrition (“si perde”) to the fact that it is an oral variety.

In lines 27-29 Davide introduces his narrative, which, as I discuss analysing the next extract, confirms what has been said so far about the variety of dialect spoken by old migrants.

(6) Il Calabrese di Ravensthorpe

‘The Calabrese man from Ravensthorpe’

(D3: Amanda & Davide, Ivo, Valeria, Fabio & Researcher)

(lines 32-36 repeated here for convenience)

32 D: che abbiamo trovato
33 que quel signore che dice:
34 calabrese che: che parlava che parlava dice
35 ah allora parliamo un po' italiano
36 e lui parlava un calabrese >di settant'anni fa<

37 V: adesso me lo ricordo ((hands to her head)) ma[onna
38 D: [madonna
39 (.)
40 D: cioè non si capiva niente lui aveva imparato questo
41 calabrese antico dai genitori
42 F: ah quindi lui era di seconda generazione
43 Re: [ah quindi era nato qua
44 D: [era di seconda generazione però [i genitori a casa=
45 F: [xx
46 D: =parlavano il il in dialetto (.) capito
47 (1.6)
48 D: e lui aveva imparato quel dialetto (.)
49 oltre all'inglese
50 e nella testa sua quello era [italiano
51 Am: [italiano ((nods)) yeah=
52 D: =quindi una volta dice che lui è andato in italia
53 oppure:: e:: ha- ha trovato degli italiani
54 Am: >e non lo capivano<=
55 D: =e aveva difficoltà a farsi capire (0.5) e lui diceva
56 ma come mai questi non mi capiscono
57 F: @
58 D: eh perché tu non parli italiano
59 stai parlando un calabrese
60 che@ cioè @ poi perché io li conosco dei calabresi
61 cioè nella mia vita
62 c'ho avuto a che fare con calabresi
63 parlando pure in dialetto: (.) loro tra di loro
64 io lo capivo più o meno
65 ma questo qua proprio non si capiva niente
66 cioè ci voleva (0.7) ci devi stare tipo
67 qualche seco:ndo a pensa:re a:
68 I: elaborare
69 D: a fartela rigirare in testa
70 e ad associare che cavolo voleva dire

32 D: *that we found*
 33 *th that man who goes:*
 34 *calabrese who: who spoke who spoke he goes*
 35 *let's speak Italian a little bit*
 36 *and he spoke in a calabrese dialect from seventy years ago*
 37 V: *now i remember ((hands to her head)) my good[ness*
 38 D: *[goodness*
 39 (1.6)
 40 D: *i mean you wouldn't understand anything he had learned this*
 41 *ancient calabrese from his parents*
 42 F: *oh so he was second generation*
 43 Re: *[oh so he was born here*
 44 D: *[he was second generation but [his parents at home=*
 45 F: *[xx*
 46 *=spoke the the in dialect (.) you see*
 47 (.)
 48 D: *and he had learned that dialect (.)*
 49 *on top of english*
 50 *and in his mind that was [italian*
 51 Am: *[italian ((nods)) yeah=*
 52 D: *=so he says that one time he went to italy or:: eh::*
 53 *he m- he met some italians*
 54 Am: *>and they wouldn't understand him<=*
 55 D: *=and he had difficulties making himself understood (0.5) and he went*
 56 *but why these people don't understand me*
 57 F: *@*
 58 D: *that's because you don't speak Italian*
 59 *you're speaking a calabrese*
 60 *that@ i mean@ then because i know some calabrese people*
 61 *i mean in my life*
 62 *i had to deal with some calabrese*
 63 *even talking in dialect: (.) they among themselves*
 64 *i would understand them more or less*
 65 *but this guy here really you wouldn't understand anything*
 66 *i mean it would take (0.7) you had to spend like*
 67 *a few se:conds to thi:nk to:*
 68 I: *elaborate*
 69 D: *to think and rethink it in your mind and to*
 70 *figure out what the hell he meant*

In line 27 Davide starts recounting an episode that happened during a trip he, Amanda and Valeria made together. The protagonist of the narrative is first introduced in line 33 with the general description “*quel signore*”, further characterised in the following line with the adjective “*calabrese*”. From the beginning, therefore, the Calabrese man is not linked to attributes of *italianità*, rather, he is always described regionally as Calabrese, a trend that will remain consistent until the end of the narrative.

In the reported speech in line 35, “*ah allora parliamo un po' di italiano*”, the Calabrese man expresses his desire to use Italian with Davide, a behaviour which, as mentioned above, is very common among old Italian-Australians; to Davide's ears, however, the language variety

spoken by the man does not sound like Italian, rather, it sounds like a “calabrese di settant’anni fa” (line 36). Davide, therefore, not only describes the man’s language as a regional dialect, similarly to what Amanda did in extract 5, he also marks it chronologically as belonging to a time long gone, thus introducing a temporal, on top of the geographical, separation between him and the man.

In line 40 he explains that the man had learned the language from his parents, thus allowing other participants to infer that he is a second-generation migrant (lines 42 and 43), and further defines his language as “calabrese antico” (line 41). He then comments on the fact that the man was convinced that the language he spoke was Italian (“e nella testa sua quello era italiano”, line 50) and supports this argument by reporting an episode the man told him.

This ‘narrative inside the narrative’ is particularly meaningful as it showcases the distance, represented here by the linguistic incompatibility, between old and new migrants. The Calabrese man tells Davide about the time he met some Italians (neither Davide nor the man can recall whether this took place in Italy or in Australia, lines 52-53) and they could not understand what he was saying “e aveva difficoltà a farsì capire”, line 55. The man must have found this very surprising and also quite frustrating, “e lui diceva ma / come mai questi non mi capiscono”, lines 55-56. The narrative reaches a conclusion in lines 58-59: the exact point where it finishes, however, is unclear, as lines 58-59, “eh perché tu non parli italiano/stai parlando un calabrese”, stand somehow in between the two narratives, the main one and the ‘narrative inside the narrative’ started in line 52. Although this turn is formally a reply to the man’s question in line 56, we can reasonably doubt that these are the words Davide actually used to reply to the man: they would represent too strong a challenge to the man’s *face* (Goffman 1959, 1967) and it is sensible to imagine that Davide replied to the man with a less confronting expression. Lines 58-59, therefore, although *formally* a reply to the man’s reported question, are more likely to belong to the main conversation and to *function* as a comment that Davide shares with other participants.

In line 60 Davide positions himself as ideally placed to understand the Calabrese dialect, thus assigning only to the man the responsibility of the communication breakdown: he argues that whereas in the past he never had problems understanding Calabrese dialect (lines 60-64), he found the language spoken by the man impossible to understand (“ma questo qua proprio non si capiva niente”, line 65). With this turn Davide is not only positioning himself as a *competent recipient*, he is also creating a further opposition, one between ‘real’ Calabrese people, that is, those living in contemporary Calabria, and the second-generation migrant, thus discursively isolating him also from his fellow *compaesani*, ‘townsmen’.

In conclusion, the whole episode is intended as a further confirmation of the distance,

exemplified through linguistic incompatibility, which new migrants feel towards Italian-Australians. Davide describes the language spoken by the man firstly as “un calabrese di settant’anni fa” (line 36), then as “questo calabrese antico” (lines 40-41) and finally “un calabrese@” (line 59), eventually resorting to laughter as he fails to find an adequate description for the man’s language.

Looking at extracts 5 and 6 as a whole, we can conclude that participants, highlighting the lacking of a common ground between them and old migrants represented by the Italian language, cooperated to construct the opposition between the two social groups: in extract 5 Amanda refers to the Sicilian man with the words “non parlava italiano parlava siciliano” (line 11), and in extract 6 Davide echoes her with his turn in lines 58-59 “eh perché tu non parli italiano/stai parlando un calabrese”. Moreover, the two characters, the Sicilian and the Calabrese, are never referred to with expressions that point to their *italianità*, but always with ones that refer to their *region* of origin. Due to their limited proficiency in the national variety, therefore, old migrants are seen as ‘less Italian’ than newer ones, an attitude quite common in contexts, such as the Italian-Australian community, where different cohorts of migrants coexist (Baldassar and Pyke 2014; Sala et al 2010).

5.1.1.2 Lexical, semantic and phonetic transference

As discussed in section 2.2.1 above, the widespread use of transference is among the main characteristics of the language of old Italian migrants in Australia. New migrants, however, as speakers exposed to a situation of language contact, are not exempt from such practice either: the data collected show that transfers from English into Italian are not infrequent in the language of new migrants, especially when discussing specific topics such as work or bureaucratic talk. Despite this, however, participants showed to perceive the use of transfers by old migrants as something different from theirs, so much so that remarks on old migrants’ use of transfers often became a ground on which to base the old-new migrant opposition.

Such opposition is often performed in discourse through the means of linguistic features such as between personal pronouns or other verbal expressions. In the following extract, for example, the opposition is performed through the use of a verb in the third person plural.

(7) Il filtro della caffettiera

‘The filter of the coffee machine’

(D3: Ivo, Valeria, Fabio)

01 I: parlavo chiaccheravo con questa tipa

02 le ho fatto vedere il mio che era rotto per vedere la:
 03 la (x) misura, mi fa ma: lo vuoi di steel? @
 04 ((general laughter))
 05 V: ah ti ha detto proprio ((hand gesture))
 06 lo vuoi (.)[di steel
 07 F: [di steel
 08 I: di steel sì
 09 parlano tutto così

01 I: *I was talking I was chatting with this woman*
 02 *I showed her mine that was broken to see the:*
 03 *the (x) size, she goes but: do you want a steel one? @*
 04 *((general laughter))*
 05 V: *oh she said exactly ((hand gesture)*
 06 *you want it (.)[of steel*
 07 F: *[of steel*
 08 I: *of steel yes*
 09 *they speak all like this*

In the conversation preceding line 01 Ivo was telling the others that a few days before he went to a shop to buy a new filter for his Italian coffee machine. The shop he went to is characterised by a strong Italian presence, both in the clientele and in the staff, therefore it is not unusual that, as we can infer from the woman's reported speech in line 03, the conversation took place, at least partly, in Italian. He reports as something noticeable and funny the fact that she used the English transfer 'steel' in an Italian sentence ("mi fa ma lo vuoi di steel", line 03) and other participants show to also find this behaviour entertaining (line 05). In lines 06 and 07 Valeria makes the juxtaposition of the two languages explicit through her hand gesture: thumb and index finger facing each other, she moves her hand on one side as she pronounces the words "lo vuoi" and to the other as she says "di steel". Interestingly, she separates the two segments of the sentence according to their syntagmatic structure and not to the actual switch point (i.e. "lo vuoi" vs. "di steel" and not "lo vuoi di" vs. "steel").

Even though this is technically an instance of lexical transference, Ivo's comment in line 09 "parlano tutto così", suggests that what he is referring to is a more general 'way of speaking', characterised by code mixing and a widespread use of transfers, that differentiates old migrants from people like him and the others at the table. As we will see in other instances presented below this opposition is often discursively constructed through the use of the third person plural (like "parlano", line 09 of the extract above), with an explicit or implicit subject¹²⁹, to refer to the category of old migrants as a whole, in contrast to the 'we-group' to which new migrants ascribe themselves (De Cillia et al. 1999).

The topic introduced by Ivo in extract 9, old migrants' use of transfers, is picked up by Amanda, which expands on it by resorting once again to her personal experience at the

¹²⁹ Italian is a 'pro-drop' language and therefore allows for the absence of explicit subjects.

patronato (see extract 5 above).

(8) Non c'ho moneta

'I have no *money*'

(D3: Amanda, Fabio & Researcher)

10 Am: ma pure non c'ho moneta
11 loro (x) loro non dicono-
12 ormai non dicono più non c'hanno soldi
13 moneta
14 money (.) una traduzione: (x)
15 quello non c'ha moneta
16 ma tutti dicono moneta (.)
17 non trovo uno che non lo dice
18 Re: sì:?
19 Am: sì moneta
20 F: è vero questa associazione:
21 Am: soldi non è- è moneta
22 quello perché non c'ha moneta
23 metto la moneta nella banca
24 F: the money
25 Am: moneta (0.5) sempre
26 quelli dell'abruzzo e molise dicono così ((counting
27 with her hands))
28 questi i vecchietti¹³⁰ dicono così
29 tutti tutti

10 Am: *but also i don't have moneta*
11 *they (x) they don't say-*
12 *now they don't say they don't have money any more*
13 *moneta*
14 *money (.) a translation: (x)*
15 *that guy doesn't have moneta*
16 *but everyone says moneta (.)*
17 *i can't find a single one that doesn't say it*
18 Re: *yeah:?*
19 Am: *yes moneta*
20 F: *that's right this association*
21 Am: *money is not- it's moneta*
22 *that guy because he's got no moneta*
23 *i put the moneta in the bank*
24 F: *the money*
25 Am: *moneta (0.5) always*
26 *those at the abruzzo and molise club say that*¹³¹*((counting with*
27 *her hands))*
28 *these the old folks say that*
29 *everyone everyone*

¹³⁰ With the word *vecchietti*, 'elderly people', she is referring to the persons she becomes in contact with when working at the patronato (see extract 5 above).

¹³¹ Amanda is referring here to the *Abruzzo e Molise Club* (check official name) in Perth. She reported she occasionally attends the club during weekends to help out with functions or special events.

The semantic transfer *moneta* literally ‘coin’, based on English ‘money’, instead of contemporary usage, *soldi*, ‘money’ is very well documented in the literature on the language of Italian migrants (Bettoni 1981) and in the passage above Amanda confirms this with her own personal experience. In line 10 we find the first of a series of ‘tokens’ she reports from the speech of old Italian migrants: “non c’ho moneta” (line 10), “quello non c’ha moneta” (line 15), “quello perché non c’ha moneta” and “metto la moneta nella banca” (lines 22 and 23). What Amanda is trying to achieve with her turns is to present the category of old migrants as a unanimous and uniform group of people who share the same linguistic practices. She starts working subtly towards this goal in line 11, using the pronoun *loro* which, as commented above, acts as a ‘category marker’ to refer to old migrants as a whole; her intent becomes much more explicit in lines 16 and 17 “ma tutti dicono moneta/non trovo uno che non lo dice” and again in lines 25-29. The discursive creation of a compact category, a ‘they-group’ that shares the same linguistic behaviours, highlights by contrast the relevance of the ‘we-group’ to which the people at the table belong.

It is interesting to note that in line 12, “ormai non dicono più non c’hanno soldi”, she seems to link this linguistic behaviour to the time these people have spent in an English speaking country: she uses the expression *ormai... più* to imply that the use of *moneta* instead of *soldi* is something that they developed in time, referring to the erosion of their Italian repertoire. In her view, this is therefore something that does not apply to new migrants, whose Italian instead is still ‘wholesome’ and not ‘corrupted’ by decades of contact with English.

The language of the *vecchietti*, ‘the old folks’, comes up again in the next extract, in which Amanda once again comments on the expressions she hears while working at the *patronato*. The conversation below presents many points of interest and will be object of my analysis again later on in this chapter (see extract 13 below). In the following discussion I focus on the second part of the extract, in which Amanda comments on old Italians’ use of the transfer *experienzare*.

(9) La lingua dei “vecchietti”

`The language of the `old folks

(D3: Amanda & Davide, Valeria, Fabio & Researcher)

01 D: è giusto [trovare i posti che che hanno
 02 Am: [((looks at the video camera)) sta spen-
 03 a sta ancora[↑]acce:sa
 04 Re: ((looks at the video camera and smiles))
 05 F: eh è quello (.) trovarli e:
 06 D: eh trovarli

07 V: fino all'ultimo minuto ((referring to the camera))
 08 F: e segnarli
 09 D: eh
 10 Am: che poi a Perth è un po' più difficile
 11 [ma se vai a Melbourne
 12 D: [shararli
 13 Am: è proprio facile trovare [sta roba
 14 D: [mo ne avevo buttata un'altra
 15 [non me l'avete
 16 Am: [sharare
 17 D: sharare
 18 Re: cos' è che hai dett- sharare
 19 D: sharare i posti buoni dove andare a [trovare
 20 Am: [perché io
 21 l'ho experie- l'ho expe[rienzato già
 22 F: [L'EXPERIENZA E:?=
 23 =[l'experie ((wags his index finger at Am))
 24 Am: [l'ho esperienziato già nella vita=
 25 =(gesture) ma:donna >quante volte me lo dicono xx<
 26 i vecchietti
 27 Re: sì:?
 28 Am: guarda là ne dicono di tutti i colori
 29 Re: sì?
 30 Am: certe volte mi stupisco pure io ne coniano:
 31 Re: [@
 32 D: [@
 33 Am: ogni giorno una @
 34 >infatti dico< questo lo dovrei di' a alessia
 35 questo lo devo di' a alessia [poi mi diment
 36 Re: [@
 37 F: [@
 38 (.)
 39 F: esperienziato
 40 Am: l'ho esperienziato già

01 D: *it's good [to find the places that have*
 02 Am: *(((looks at the video camera)) it's of-*
 03 *oh it's still ↑on*
 04 Re: *(((looks at the video camera and smiles))*
 05 F: *yeah that's it (.) find them and:*
 06 D: *yep find them*
 07 V: *until the last minute ((referring to the camera))*
 08 F: *and remember them*
 09 D: *yep*
 10 Am: *then again in perth it's a bit more difficult*
 11 *[but if you go to melbourne*
 12 D: *[shararli*
 13 Am: *it's really easy to find [this stuff*
 14 D: *[now i had thrown in another one*
 15 *[you didn't*
 16 Am: *[sharare*
 17 D: *sharare*
 18 R: *what did you s- sharare*
 19 D: *sharare the good places where [to find*
 20 Am: *[because i*

21 *have experie- i have expe[rienced it already*
 22 F: [THE EXPERIENCE E:?=
 23 =i[the experie ((gesture))
 24 Am: *[I've experiencced it already in my life=*
 25 =i((gesture)) my goo:dness >how many times they say it to me xx<
 26 *the old folks*
 27 Re: *yeah:?*
 28 Am: *look, there they say all sorts of stuff*
 29 Re: *yeah?*
 30 Am: *sometimes even I am surprised they invent ((gesture))*
 31 Re: [*@*
 32 D: [*@*
 33 Am: *every day a new one@*
 34 *>in fact i say< i should tell this to alessia*
 35 *[i have to tell this to alessia [then i forg*
 36 Re: [*@*
 37 F: [*@*
 38 (.)
 39 F: *experienced*
 40 Am: *I've experienced it already*

At the beginning of the extract above participants are discussing the best places in Perth to buy Italian food. Davide and Fabio come to an agreement (lines 01, 05-06) on the fact that you must look for these places and once you have found them you should remember them (line 09) and share them with your fellow Italians (line 12 and then line 19). The transfer used by Davide in line 12 is rich of implications and, as mentioned above, it is analysed later in the chapter.

It is this transfer, however, that triggers Amanda's comments in the second part of the extract: Davide's use of an English verb integrated into Italian morphology patterns reminds her of the expressions she hears when dealing with old Italian migrants at work. In particular, she mentions the verb *experienzare*, a transfer into Italian of the English verb 'to experience', integrated morphologically but not phonetically¹³². She introduces the expression through a change in her footing, as she becomes the animator of words she must have heard several times at the *patronato* (see extract 5), "l'ho experienzato già nella vita" (lines 20-21 and completed in line 24). Interestingly, however, Fabio, beginning to speak before Amanda has concluded her turn (line 22), mistakenly thinks that she just produced another (phonological) transfer¹³³, *esperienza* (lines 22 and 23): he points to her, shaking his index finger, lifts his eyebrows and repeats very loudly what he thinks she was about to say, "l'esperienza". Fabio is picking on Amanda for what he thinks is another instance of transference, similar to the one that Davide produced in line 12, "shararli". As I discuss commenting the first part of this extract later on in the chapter, this linguistic behaviour is not fully acceptable in the community of new migrants,

¹³² Towards the end of the extract (lines 39-40), the transfer becomes fully integrated, as the /x/ sound is replaced by the /s/ sound in Fabio's turn (line 39) and in the following one by Amanda (line 40).

¹³³ See section 5.1.2 below for an analysis of the conversational dynamics which developed during this dinner and which led to this sarcastic 'pursuit' of transfers.

hence the need to mark it and sarcastically point it to the others' attention.

In lines 25 and 26 (“madonna quante volte me lo dicono/i vecchietti”), however, Amanda makes it clear that she is reporting the speech of the old Italian migrants she works with. She then goes on expressing her disbelief at the things that ‘the old folks’ can come up with: in line 30 she once again performs her identity of ‘expert’ about old migrants and their language by saying that they can come up with such unpredictable expressions that *even she* is surprised, “certe volte mi stupisco pure io”, let alone someone who is not used to dealing with old migrants. In line 34, instead, she makes my identity of ‘researcher’ relevant by reporting that she often thinks that she should tell me the expressions she hears at work, as apparently she thinks they would be interesting for my research.

Once again, the opposition between old and new migrants is constructed in discourse through the use of expressions that link old migrants to the ideas of ‘past’ and of ‘old age’, this time not without some bonhomie and affection on behalf of Amanda. The language of the *vecchietti* and, in particular, their use of transfers sound alien and odd to the ears of new migrants, so much so that it often becomes object of their sarcasm and laughter.

5.1.1.3 Code mixing

As the literature on the linguistic attitudes of Italians in Australia demonstrates (Bettoni and Gibbons 1988, Rubino 2009a, 2009b), code mixing traditionally attracts the strongest negative reactions from the Italian-Australian community. Although in the recordings references to old migrants’ use of transference were far more frequent, new migrants also seem to be particularly sensitive to code mixing, as shown in the following extract:

(10) Radio Italia

(D6: Martina, Ernesto & Bianca, Researcher)

01 M: sometimes i try to listen to the: (0.9)
02 e: the e: italian radio?
03 B: [(x)
04 E: [@
05 M: like sometimes they do (x) e:
06 broadcast some programs from rai-
07 radio †due it's actually pretty good
08 like il ruggito del conigli:gio,
09 this is it's funny you know jus you know
10 you just laugh but then, there are these programs
11 for italians that live [in australia
12 Re: [mmh:
13 M: and they are like (1)
14 ((mimicking the voice of an old person))

15 ok now we have to (put)
 16 (x) a song of natalino otto
 17 Re: ((smiles))
 18 M: you know they're all so old these people,
 19 B: ((tilts her head and smiles))
 20 E: @
 21 M: they and they're all these old italians calling
 22 that they speak half italian and half english
 23 E: @
 24 B: @

In the passage above, carried out in English because of the presence of a non-Italian speaking partner (Bianca), Martina shares with other participants her view on *Radio Italia*, one of the Italian radio stations in Australia. The first part of the extract offers several points of interest with regards to the construction of interactional identity and I analyse it in detail later on in the chapter (see p.171). As for code mixing, instead, it comes into play towards the end of the extract, in lines 20 and 21, when Martina comments on the calls that listeners make to *Radio Italia*. After having defined the callers as 'old' ("they're all these old italians", line 20, which echoes line 17), in line 21 she turns her attention to their language and says that they speak "half Italian and half English". The tone of her sentence, together with her facial expression, suggests that her opinion on this practice is not positive; moreover, Ernesto, and even his partner Bianca, react with laughter, which, as in other instances presented above, seems to be a means to take a distance from the practice of code mixing and from the category of people to which this practice belongs.

5.1.2 Shortening the distance: new migrants' use of integrated transfers

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the vast majority of the extracts collected during data analysis suggest a strong opposition between the categories of old and new migrants. Despite this, however, it was also possible to identify passages of talk in which the distance between the two groups seemed somewhat shortened: instances of this kind are far less frequent in the corpus, but their presence allows for a further confirmation of the shifting nature of conversational positioning and of the impossibility to separate the categorisation processes from the context of the interaction.

In the section above I discussed how new migrants perceive the language spoken by old migrants as different from their own in many ways, from the dialect they speak, to the widespread use of transference and code mixing. New migrants, however, are not totally exempt from such linguistic practices themselves: not only is their language rich of non-integrated lexical transfers (see for instance extract 5a in Chapter IV and extract 15 in this chapter) and semantic transfers, but they also used, although far less frequently, some *integrated* lexical

transfers. The use of this kind of transference by new migrants, I would argue, is especially meaningful because fully integrated lexical transfers, such as *fensa* and *carro*¹³⁴, are also socially integrated in the language of old migrants (Bettoni 1981), and participants are well aware of it (see extract 9 above). For this reason, the only three times participants used a transfer of this type in the corpus (see extracts presented in this section), it has been marked very clearly either by speakers themselves or by other interactants; moreover, the use of such a strongly characterised linguistic feature is likely to have an impact on the conversational positioning of the interactants, as I argue in the analysis of the following extracts.

In the following pages I discuss three instances of integrated transfers; in all three examples, a critical role is played by Amanda and it will be of great interest to see how her reactions and conversational strategies change according to the context of the interaction.

I present the extracts in an order that reflects their significance in the conversation and their level of 'markedness', that is, how more or less explicitly they are commented on by interactants and how they are perceived as more or less acceptable. In the extract below, for instance, the transfer is not explicitly commented on, but more subtle conversational 'moves' suggest that it is considered only partly acceptable.

(11) 'Jumpare'

(D1: Amanda & Davide, Martina & Angus, Fabio)

01 Am: the cinghiali ruined the atmosphere?
 02 M: no, we didn't know it was a cinghiale=
 03 = it was ourf ourf ((sounds made by the animal))
 04 A: it was a cinghiali
 05 M: and then and then: i asked they say
 06 no no it's area with the cinghiali
 07 eh (x) boar wild boar
 08 A: oeh- I don't know I was pretty sure.
 09 @
 10 Am: e angus già voleva: (1.3) jumpare::
 11 M: sì esatto [buttarsi sulla-
 12 F: [per acchiapparlo.
 13 D: but in australia they do that
 14 M: suo cugino lo fa
 15 D: wild boar:

01 Am: *the wild boar ruined the atmosphere?*
 02 M: *no, we didn't know it was a wild boar=*
 03 *= it was ourf ourf ((sounds made by the animal))*
 04 A: *it was a wild boar*
 05 M: *and then and then: i asked they say*

¹³⁴ It is worth noting that in my corpus integrated transfers are limited to verbs; I found three instances of such transference and all of them are English verbs adapted to the Italian morphology through the use of Italian endings.

06 *no no its' area with the wild boars*
 07 *e (x) boar wild boar*
 08 A: *oeh- I don't know I was pretty sure.*
 09 *@*
 10 Am: *and angus was ready to (.) jump*
 11 M: *that's right [to jump on the-*
 12 F: *[to catch it].*
 13 D: *but in australia they do that*
 14 M: *his cousin does it*
 15 D: *wild boar:*

The passage above is the continuation of extract 20, in which, as I discuss later on, participants talk about the TV commercial of an Italian brand of brushes, *Pennelli Cinghiale*. Picking up on the word *cinghiale*, 'wild boar', Angus recounts an episode that happened to him and Martina during a trip to Italy: prior to the beginning of the extract above, he described a very romantic atmosphere, the two of them on top of a mountain overlooking the sea, the full moon, when they suddenly heard some noises which they thought may come from a *cinghiale*. This is where the extract starts, with Amanda's turn in line 01.

Since the beginning of Angus' narrative, the conversation had been carried out mainly in English, with some isolated switches to Italian by Martina. In line 10, "e angus già voleva *jumpare*", Amanda switches to Italian to make a humorous remark on the situation: knowing Angus' temperament, she suggests that he was ready to *jump* on what he thought was a wild boar. In line with the humorous tone of her turn, she creates the verb *jumpare*, an integrated transfer from English (< *to jump*+ the ending of the infinitive *-are*). Her use of such an expression is rather surprising, if considered that several times during the dinners, and not without a hint of kind criticism, Amanda herself presented this kind of transfers as a characteristic of the language of old migrants. Moreover, as I discuss commenting the two following extracts, it also contrasts with her reaction to others' use of similar expressions.

A closer look at the details of the interaction, however, will help to understand her reasons for this apparent lack of consistency. Firstly, it is worthwhile reflecting on the conversational reasons for her switch to Italian in line 10. A possible answer comes from her use of the third person to refer to Angus, the only non-Italian speaker at the table: addressing him in the third person she selects the others, not Angus, as primary recipients of her turn, hence the choice of Italian, the 'we-code' of all other participants. A first reason for her use of a transfer like *jumpare* can therefore lie in the fact that, unlike the next two extracts, this conversation is being carried out mainly in English, and her turn in Italian in line 10 represents a sort of humorous aside. The juxtaposition of the two languages in the same conversation can therefore be a factor that makes the use of an integrated English word in an Italian turn more acceptable.

Secondly, bearing in mind that Amanda and Angus are close friends, we can consider her

turn as a joke about Angus' temperament: even though we do not have video recordings of this dinner, the intonation of her turn suggests that she is smiling while producing it, and, in particular, while pronouncing the word *jumpare*, which has added emphasis and a slight trembling towards the end. We can therefore infer that, together with the presence of code switching, the humorous intent of her turn is what 'allows' her to use a transfer like *jumpare* and, in her view, makes it acceptable to an Italian audience.

Others' reactions to Amanda's turn, however, partially contradict her presuppositions: nobody audibly laughs, nor comments on her transfer explicitly, but both Fabio and Martina, maintaining the code choice of Italian, provide alternatives for the transfer. Martina, line 10, gives the rather literal translation "buttarsi", whereas Fabio, line 11, explains what Amanda meant with the words "per acciapparlo", 'to catch it'. The fact that Martina and Fabio considered it appropriate to provide alternatives to the transfer *jumpare*, I would argue, suggests that the use of such linguistic features is not totally acceptable among new migrants, and they need to be further identified as transfers by providing an appropriate Italian equivalent.

In the following extract, instead, participants' reception of a similar integrated lexical transfer appears as more marked and less neutral: unlike the previous instance, the transfer is here discussed explicitly, with interesting remarks on its acceptance and also on its significance for my research.

(12) 'Squeezare'

(D3: Amanda & Davide, Ivo, Valeria, Fabio & Researcher)

01 D: che faccio ci butto l'aglio: (.) con la camicia=
02 Re: =eh giusto vestito
03 D: vestito
04 V: e cosa viene di diver- cos'è la differenza
05 (0.8) perché perché le metti con la camicia
06 D: non lo so perché poi eh si: si cuoce tutto intero,
07 poi tu lo prendi e lo [squeesi dentro
08 V: [lo togli
09 ah ok
10 Am: ((looks at other participants moving her left hand in
11 front of her)) squeesi ((pointing her right hand at
12 Re))
13 Re: hai visto ↑eh
14 F: ta:c questo=
15 Re: =registrato=
16 F: =ci sarà
17 Re: [@
18 Am: [@
19 I: cinque stelle questo

20 Re: [@@
 21 Am: [@

01 D: *what do i do i throw in the garlic (.)with the skin on=*
 02 Re: *=that's right dressed*
 03 D: *dressed*
 04 V: *and why is it diff- what's the difference*
 05 *(0.8) why why do you put them with the skin on*
 06 D: *I don't know because then ah it it cooks whole,*
 07 *then you take it and you [squeeze it in*
 08 V: *[take it out*
 09 *ah ok*
 10 Am: *((looks at other participants moving her left hand in front of*
 11 *her)) squeezi ((pointing her right hand*
 12 *at Re))*
 13 Re: *you see ↑ ah*
 14 F: *there you go this=*
 15 Re: *=recorded=*
 16 F: *=is going to be in it*
 17 Re: [@
 18 Am: [@
 19 I: *five stars this one*
 20 Re: [@@
 21 Am: [@

Participants are discussing their cooking skills, in particular those of the men at the table; in line 01 Davide says that he sometimes puts in his dishes a clove of garlic with the skin still on, *aglio in camicia* 'garlic in a shirt' or *vestito*, 'dressed', as it is metaphorically referred to in Italian. In lines 05 and 06 Valeria asks what the benefits of this technique are, and, in lines 07-08, Davide explains that, once the garlic is cooked, you can squeeze the clove into your dish to release the flavour.

In line 08, "lo squeezi dentro", he uses the English transfer 'to squeeze' adapted into Italian by adding the ending of the second person singular *-i*, a feature similar to the one deployed by Amanda in extract 11 above. This time, however, Amanda herself reacts to the transfer by pointing it to the attention of other participants and to mine in particular: her hand gesture in line 10 and the facial expression that accompanies it suggest that she disapproves Davide's use of such transfers and she looks at other participants as if to say "hear that!". She then points at me (line 11) and repeats "squeezi" as if to draw my attention to the expression. The significance of her turn is therefore two-fold: in the first part, when she addresses other participants, she is somehow labelling the expression used by Davide, her husband, as not appropriate to use with an Italian audience. In fact, compared to extract 11, the interactional circumstances are different: despite the presence of an English speaker, Hannah, the interaction is being carried out exclusively in Italian and, in addition, Davide's turn does not have the sarcastic intent that Amanda's had. These two factors may account for Amanda's change in

attitude with regards to the use of such transfers.

In the second part of her turn, line 11, she adds that not only is Davide's expression hardly acceptable, it may also have some significance for my research. In the turn in line 12, "hai visto eh", I accept the identity of researcher projected on me by Amanda and jokingly provide support to her view of the transfer. From this point on, the tone of the interaction becomes humorous and other interactants pick up on the joke about the research: Fabio ("tac questo/ci sarà", lines 14 and 16), myself ("registrato", line 15) and Ivo ("cinque stelle questo", line 19) all contribute to the conversation to underline the fact that an expression such as *squeesi* might be of some significance for the study. Ivo's comment in line 19, in particular, describes the expression as especially interesting, "cinque stelle questa": the fact that an integrated transfer like "squeesi" deserves 'five stars' suggests that the expression is perceived as an anomaly in the speech of a new migrant and is worth being included in the research.

The third and last instance of integrated transfers in the recording brings us back to extract 9 above, partly reported here for convenience:

(13) 'Sharare'

(D3: Amanda & Davide, Ivo, Valeria, Fabio & Researcher)

01 D: è giusto [trovare i posti che che hanno
02 Am: [((looks at the video camera)) sta spen-
03 a sta ancora acce:sa
04 Re: ((looks at the video camera and smiles))
05 F: eh è quello (.) trovarli e:
06 D: eh trovarli
07 V: fino all'ultimo minuto ((referring to the camera))
08 F: e segnarli
09 D: eh
10 Am: che poi a Perth è un po' più difficile
11 [ma se vai a Melbourne
12 D: [shararli
13 Am: è proprio facile trovare [sta roba
14 D: [mo ne avevo buttata un'altra
15 [non me l'avete
16 Am: [sharare
17 D: sharare
18 Re: cos' è che hai dett- sharare
19 D: sharare i posti buoni dove andare a [trovare
20 Am: [perché io
21 l'ho experie- l'ho expe[rienzato già
22 F: [L'EXPERIENZA E:?=
23 =[l'experie ((gesture))
24 Am: [l'ho esperenziato già nella vita=
25 =(gesture)) ma:donna >quante volte me lo dicono xx<
26 i vecchietti

01 D: *it's good [to find the places that have*

02 Am: (((looks at the video camera)) it's of-
 03 oh it's still ↑on
 04 Re: ((looks at the video camera and smiles))
 05 F: yeah that's it (.) find them and:
 06 D: yep find them
 07 V: until the last minute ((referring to the camera))
 08 F: and remember them
 09 D: yep
 10 Am: then again in perth it's a bit more difficult
 11 [but if you go to melbourne
 12 D: [shararli
 13 Am: it's really easy to find [this stuff
 14 D: [now i had thrown in another one
 15 [you didn't
 16 Am: [sharare
 17 D: sharare
 18 R: what did you s- sharare
 19 D: sharare the good places where [to find
 20 Am: [because i
 21 have experie- i have experie[n]ced it already
 22 F: [THE EXPERIENCE E:?=
 23 =[the experie ((gesture))
 24 Am: [I've experie[n]ced it already in my life=
 25 =((gesture)) my goo:dness >how many times they say it to me xx<
 26 the old folks

I have already commented on this conversation and on the lines that follow discussing extract 9 above. On that occasion my focus was on Amanda's narrative about the language of the *vecchiotti* and their use of expressions such as *experienzare*. This time I draw my attention to what originated such narrative, that is, Davide's use of a similar transfer, "shararli" (line 12). As explained above, participants are discussing the best places to buy Italian food in Perth, and Davide, in agreement with Fabio, concludes that one must find them (line 01 and 06) and *share* them with his/her friends (line 12). Instead of an Italian expression such as *condividere*, he uses the English equivalent 'to share' and adapts it to the Italian verbal morphology by adding not only the suffix for the infinitive, *-ar(e)*, but also the direct object pronoun in its masculine plural form *-li*, referring to the shops. As Davide's turn in line 12 overlaps with Amanda's speech, other participants seem to have missed his expression: for this reason he produces the turn in lines 14 and 15 "mo ne avevo buttata un'altra/non me l'avete", in which he jokingly expresses his disappointment for the fact that the others did not pick up his use of another transfer (after the one discussed in extract 12).

To fully understand the meaning of his turn in line 14, it is worth considering the timeline of the dinner: the conversation in extract 13 takes place some twenty minutes after the one presented in extract 12 above. Since the expression he used on that occasion, "squeesi", generated such a strong reaction in other participants, Davide was expecting something similar

to happen following his use of a similar transfer. Realising that the others had probably missed what he said due to the overlap with Amanda, he makes the remark in lines 14 and 15 and then repeats the transfer in line 17, “*sharare*”, this time without the ending for the direct object pronoun. Following my request in line 18, he repeats the whole concept in line 19, before being interrupted by the start of Amanda’s narrative. The reason behind Davide’s use of the transfer, I would argue, is purely humorous, and, given the attention that his use of transference received in extract 12, he played the same card again here, hoping to get a similar reaction.

The real point of interest in this extract, however, is Amanda’s reaction to the transfer and the link she establishes with the language of old migrants. In line 16, by quoting the transfer created by Davide, she shows that although his speech overlapped with hers in line 11, she actually heard what he said and with her body language lets others know what she thinks of it: she smiles and tilts her head slightly to the left, as if to express her disapproval towards the expression. So far, her reaction is quite similar to the one she had in extract 20 above; however, whereas on that occasion she went on to link the use of such expressions to my research, this time she makes another meaningful connection, that with the language of the *vecchiotti*.

In line 20, her narrative about the use of the expression “*experienzare*” begins *in medias res*, that is, she starts her turn with a quote, without any prelude (lines 20 and 21 “*perché io/l’ho experie- l’ho experienzato già*”). At first, other interactants struggle to understand her intent, as Fabio’s turn in line 22 demonstrates. In lines 24-26, however, as she concludes the turn started in line 20, her intent becomes clear: without making the connection explicit, but, rather, exploiting the resources of conversational sequencing, she links the expression used by Davide to the ones she hears at work, therefore creating a link between new and old generations of migrants.

To conclude, I would argue that new migrants’ use of integrated lexical transfers represents both a commonality with and a differentiation from the category of old Italian migrants: this kind of transference is used by new migrants for specific conversational purposes, such as humour (extract 11) or expressivity (extracts 12 and 13), and their use is always marked, either by speakers themselves (extract 13) or by other interactants (extracts 11 and 12)¹³⁵.

5.2 Identity categories at play: old migrants, new migrants and real Italians

Whereas in the sections above the opposition between old migrants, new migrants and real

¹³⁵ It is worth noting that the only two participants using such transfers during the recordings were Davide and Amanda, a couple who had been living in Australia for more than five years at the time, that is, more than most of the other participants. Moreover, given that this kind of transference is considered in a certain sense unacceptable by new migrants, it is possible that the awareness of being recorded is also accountable for the very low number of instances produced during the dinners (3).

Italians was carried out in a more discursive way or, in other words, it was ‘talked about’ rather than ‘acted out’, the extracts that follow see interactants’ conversational identities at play on a continuum that has the categories of ‘real Italians’ and ‘Italian-Australians’ at the two opposite ends.

(14) The Sicilian club

(D3: Amanda & Davide, Ivo & Hannah, Fabio)

01 I: lui lavora lì ((to H))
 02 H: yeah I know (.) schneider
 03 Am: [schneider
 04 D: [e e e lei lavora:[a:l
 05 Am: [sci
 06 D: sicilian club=
 07 Am: =si [(purse hand))
 08 H: [@
 09 Am: ma (insi-) ma io non lavoro per i-
 10 se tu dici che lavoro al sicilian club
 11 sembra che lavoro per i- per il club siciliano
 12 F: @
 13 H: have you ever been there? ((to I))

01 I: he works there ((to H))
 02 H: yeah I know (.) schneider
 03 Am: [schneider
 04 D: [and and and she wo:rks [at the:
 05 Am: [sci
 06 D: sicilian club
 07 Am: =yes [((purse hand))
 08 H: [@
 09 Am: but (insi-) but I don't work for t-
 10 if you say that i work at the sicilian club
 it seems that i work for t- for the sicilian club
 12 F: @
 13 H: have you ever been there? ((to I))

In the extract above, participants are talking about their workplaces. In line 01, “lui lavora lì”, Ivo is referring to Davide and is saying to Hannah, who was until then engaged in a parallel conversation with Valeria, that Davide works in a place that happens to be in the same suburb they live in. In line 04 Davide shifts the focus on Amanda’s workplace: as discussed before, Amanda works for an Italian-Australian welfare institution, the *patronato*, physically based at the *Sicilian Club* in Perth, although being functionally separated from it. Davide, instead, in his turn which begins in line 04 and ends in line 06, “lei lavora al/sicilian club” jokingly presents Amanda as working *at* the Sicilian club. Amanda, with her hand gesture in line 07, shows disagreement with what Davide is saying, even though she seems to accept Davide’s joke by smiling throughout the exchange. It is interesting to note that Hannah too, despite her little knowledge

of Italian, displays a correct conversational inference by *framing* Davide's turn as a joke (see her laughter in line 08).

The *Sicilian Club* is a symbol of the post-war Italian migration to Perth and, by saying that Amanda works there, Davide is projecting onto her the identity of someone who sympathises or, so to speak, 'gets mixed up' with that cohort of Italian migrants. Amanda's reaction, however, is quite clear: first with a hand gesture ('purse hand' in line 07), and then by saying it explicitly, she rejects what Davide just said (see "ma", 'but', repeated twice in line 09) and reaffirms that she does not work *for* the *Sicilian Club* (line 09, "ma io non lavoro per i-"). In lines 10 and 11 she makes the distinction between working *at* the *Sicilian Club* and working *for* the *Sicilian Club* explicit ("se tu dici che lavoro al sicilian club sembra che lavoro per i-/ per il club siciliano"), thus re-establishing the separation between herself and the Italian-Australian institution. She is therefore rejecting the identity of 'old-Italian-migrant sympathiser' that Davide projected on her and is doing this very unambiguously.

In this exchange, working for an Italian-Australian institution such as the Sicilian club is therefore considered something not to be proud of, something even laughable (see line 08, Amanda's smiling throughout her turns and Fabio's laughter in line 13), thus confirming the need felt by new migrants to differentiate themselves from the historic Italian community in Australia and the institutions that represent it. As I argued discussing extracts 1, 4 and 6 above, laughter is a powerful means often exploited by participants in carrying out identity work; more specifically, in this extract, laughter is used to express disaffiliation from the social group of old migrants.

A similar contrast between old migrants and new migrants is displayed in the following passage, where the opposition between the two groups is encapsulated in a hand gesture:

(15) I 'builder' italiani

'Italian builders'

(D4: Roberto, Valeria, Fernando, Fabio & Researcher)

01 R: perché qua sono veramente pessimi
02 non sono proprio capaci di costruire
03 non sono proprio capaci una cosa incredibile
04 V: ma dai?
05 R: [(xx)
06 Fe: [(xx) ((to F))
07 F: @
08 R: praticamente è come se vivessero:
09 stanno trent'anni indietro
10 noi abbiamo progettato una casa nel vecchio studio
11 tutta in cemento armato cemento armato a vista
12 e insomma dovrebbe essere proprio sai
13 proprio [liscio liscio liscio
14 V: [eh

15 (x) (xx)
 16 F: e ma perché [non lo usano
 17 R: [cioè ci sono i buchi così ((gesture))
 18 Fe: perché non importano
 19 (x) (xx)
 20 R: non lo sanno fare non lo sanno fare
 21 e non lo usano molto sì
 22 V: [ale vuoi una mano ((to Re))
 23 R: [(xx)
 24 Re: [no no sto solo abbrustolendo un po' più di pane
 25 Fe: [(xxx)
 26 perché se no arrivano gli altri due [(x)
 27 F: [sono italiani
 28 i builder è quello il problema
 29 R: ((nods)) [eh italiani però di: ((hand gesture))=
 30 F: [@
 31 R: =sì e sì è quello il problema

01 R: *because here they are really terrible*
 02 *they are really bad at building*
 03 *they really can't it's incredible*
 04 V: *seriously?*
 05 R: [(xxx)
 06 Fe: [(xx) ((to F))
 07 F: @
 08 R: *basically it's as if they li:ved*
 09 *they are thirty years behind*
 10 *we designed a house at my former office*
 11 *all in reinforced concrete in-view reinforced concrete*
 12 *and i mean it should be really you know*
 13 *really [smooth smooth smooth*
 14 V: [yeah
 15 (x) (xx)
 16 F: *but it's because [they don't use it*
 17 R: [i mean there are holes this big ((gesture))
 18 Fe: *because they don't import*
 19 (x) (xx)
 20 R: *they don't know how to do it they don't know how to do it*
 21 *and they don't use it much yeah*
 22 V: [ale do you want a hand ((to Re))
 23 R: [(xx)
 24 Re: [no no i'm just toasting a bit more bread
 25 Fe: [(xxx)
 26 Re: *because otherwise when the other two come [(x)*
 27 F: [are italian
 28 *the builders that's the problem*
 29 R: ((nods)) [yeah italian but from: ((hand gesture))=
 30 F: [@
 31 R: =yeah yeah that's the problem=

In this extract, Roberto, an architect, is arguing that building standards in Australia are low. Even though he does not say it explicitly he is comparing the quality he was used to in working as an architect in Italy to the one he experiences here. Italy is also the implicit term of comparison in

line 09, when he says that Australian builders are technically thirty years behind. He then goes on to support his opinion with an example. The terms he uses to refer to Australian building standards are quite strong (“qua sono veramente pessimi”, line 01, “non sono proprio capaci di costruire”, line 02, “una cosa incredibile” line 03). In establishing this opposition between Australian and Italian building standards he is showing a certain degree of nationalistic sense of pride and he is happily sharing with fellow Italians the superiority of their homeland with regards to building and design.

Fabio’s move in lines 27-28, however, goes in the opposite direction: denying any nationalistic sense of pride, he jokingly points out that the problem is that many people employed in the building industry in Australia are, in fact, Italian “sono italiani i builder è quello il problema”, lines 27-28). Structuring his turn with an inversion between subject and verb (“sono italiani i builder” rather than the unmarked order “i builder sono italiani”), he puts the words “sono italiani” in the strong thematic position. It is also worth noticing that he uses a lexical transfer, “builder” instead of the Italian equivalent, *muratori*, even though this transfer does not seem to have any significant conversational value.

By saying “sono italiani i builder” Fabio is using the categorisation device of nationality without differentiating between different cohorts of Italian migrants, and it is this particular aspect of Fabio’s turn that Roberto disagrees with. Whereas he accepts Fabio’s remark (see the nodding in line 29) and eventually agrees with him (“sì è quello il problema”, line 31), in line 29 he takes a stance against Fabio’s categorisation. The meaning of his turn is encapsulated in the hand gesture: he raises his arm and moves his forearm back and forth, as to refer to something that belongs to a past long gone, as if to say that Italians employed in the building industry in Australia belong to the specific social group of old migrants, and cannot therefore be referred to just as Italians.

Summarising the conversational dynamics of this exchange, I would argue that the initial opposition drawn by Roberto between Italy and Australia with regards to building standards (lines 01-13) was somewhat aimed at boosting the Italian identity and nationalistic sense of pride of the group; Fabio’s joke in lines 27-28, instead, and his use of the category ‘Italian’ to refer to old migrants, represents a threat to this group identity and it is only after Roberto has established a distinction between different groups within the category (line 29) that the two can come to a final agreement (line 31).

As mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, however, the old migrant-new migrant opposition is not the only one made relevant by interactants in carrying out identity work. Participants consistently used another pair of categories to take up their positioning and negotiate their identities, that of ‘real Italian’ vs ‘Italian migrant’. The following episode is

emblematic in this regard.

(16) "Wog, non come noi"

'Wog, not like us'

One of the strongest and most explicit stances taken by participants with regards to the 'real Italian' vs 'Italian migrant' opposition took place outside recording time. Despite the lack of a transcript, I decided to report the conversation in my field notes¹³⁶ and to mention it in the analysis due to its relevance, especially as opposed to extract 19 below, in which the same speaker, during the same dinner, deploys the same category marker in an altogether different way.

The conversation involved Martina and me as active speakers, with Fabio also present as an overhearer; it took place at the beginning of dinner number 6, while we were waiting for other participants to arrive. Martina was talking about some Italians she knows who live in Perth and I asked her whether they were long-term or newly arrived migrants. Instead of asking her explicitly, however, I said "ma Italiani::?", 'but Italian::?'; she understood what I meant and replied with "no no wog non come noi", 'no no wog not like us'. As mentioned in chapter II the derogatory word 'wog' was used in the years after the post-war mass migration to refer to migrants from Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Greece and Turkey. It is progressively becoming obsolete in contemporary Australia, although it is still used, sometimes with bonhomie and self-humour, even by people belonging to that same category. This is the case, I would argue, of the conversation between Martina and me reported above, and even more so in the one reported in extract number 19 below. By replying "no no wog non come noi" to my question "ma Italiani::?" she establishes a clear-cut distinction between the category 'wog' and the 'we-group' to which Martina and I, both recent migrants, belong. Also, the word 'wog' is clearly used here to refer to prior generations of migrants, with only subtle derogatory connotation.

Other aspects of her turn are rather ambiguous: given that in my question I referred to the ethnic category 'Italian', one possible interpretation of her reply is that both the categories she makes relevant, that of 'wog' and the 'we-group', are subgroups of the wider category of 'Italians'. The strong opposition "no, no" at the beginning of her reply, however, seems to suggest that she is opposing the category 'wogs' to the category 'Italians' that I mentioned in my

¹³⁶ For my data collection I decided not to take field notes during dinners in the presence of participants. I made this decision because, given the presence of the video camera, I wanted to limit as much as possible other factors that could increase participants' feeling of being 'studied' and emphasise my identity as researcher. All practical details were recorded by the video camera, so I did not need to make notes about those aspects. I only annotated at the end of each dinner any impressions or feelings about the meeting or, as in the example above, anything relevant that was said or done outside recording time.

question, implying that the ‘we-group’ is the only category that can be considered ‘Italian’. The ‘we group’ can therefore be interpreted as that of new Italian migrants, as opposed to the old ones, or as that of ‘real Italians’ as opposed to ‘Italian migrants’ or ‘wogs’ (see Sala et al. 2010).

The assimilation of the category ‘new migrant’ to that of ‘real Italian’, is indeed one of the most interesting aspects of the identity work carried out by interactants during recordings. Similar dynamics were enacted also in the following extracts, each presenting specific traits linked to the local context of the interaction and showing different means used by participants to achieve their conversational goal.

In extract 17 below, for example, the contrast between ‘real Italians’ and Italian migrants is performed through the ‘physical’, spatial opposition between those who are in Australia and those who are, or *feel like* they are, in Italy.

(17) *The Re Store*

(D2: Giada, Fernando, Fabio & Researcher)

01 F: comunque (.) anche noi tutti ci dicevano (0.8)
 02 ((high pitch)) ah siete italiani,
 03 siete stati al re store >siete andati al re store<
 04 e noi no no no no no=
 05 =io non sono andato è andata lei ((looks at Re who is
 06 preparing food in the kitchen)) (1.1) è tornata a casa
 07 ((shakes his head)) °non val la pena°@
 08 (1.3)
 09 F: delusa comunque no
 10 (1.2)
 11 F: qualcosa sì c'è [ma non è
 12 Re: [(x)
 13 F: poi sai forse ti crei quest'immagine del[del=
 14 G: [sì perché
 15 F: =negozio perfetto
 16 (x) (xx)
 17 G: cioè(.)per quelli che sono qua forse,
 18 [che magari sono stati in italia=
 19 F: [(nodding))eh: quello
 20 G: =allora hanno [vaga reminiscenza ma-
 21 Fe: [qualcuno vuole del vino? ((F lifts his
 22 glass and Fe pours wine))
 23 Re: ((to F)) ma te hai già la birra aperta.

01 F: *anyway (.) everyone was telling us too (0.8)*
 02 *((high pitch)) oh you're italian,*
 03 *have you been to the re store >did you go to the re store<*
 04 *and we no no no no =*
 05 *=i didn't go she went ((looks at Re who is preparing food in*
 06 *the kitchen)) (1.1) she came back home ((shakes his head))*
 07 *°it's not worth it° @*
 08 *(1.3)*
 09 F: *it was a let down, wasn't it?*

10 (1.2)
 11 F: there is something yes [but it's not
 12 Re: [(x)
 13 F: then you know maybe you had imagined it as [as=
 14 G: [yes because
 15 F: = the perfect shop
 16 (x) (xx)
 17 G: i mean (.) perhaps for those who are here,
 18 [who maybe have been to italy =
 19 F: [((nodding)) yeah: that's it
 20 G: = and then they have [vague memories but-
 21 Fe: [does anyone want wine? ((F lifts his
 22 glass and Fe pours wine))
 23 Re: ((to F)) but you have the beer open already.

In the lines above participants are talking about the *Re Store*, a long-established shop in Perth that sells Italian food, wine and household items. The shop is very popular among the Italian community in Perth, mainly among old migrants but also among newer ones. A few seconds before the conversation above, Fernando referred to the *Re Store* as a “luogo di pellegrinaggio”, ‘place of pilgrimage’, thus wittingly suggesting the ‘emotional’ significance the shop has for Italian migrants in Perth. The expression, despite being primarily a joke, also has a nuance of melancholy, as it echoes migrants’ struggle to find places representative of their homeland, its food, its flavour and its traditions.

In lines 04-10, Fabio reports my impressions after being to the *Re Store*, and tells the others that the shop was a let down (“non val la pena”, “delusa comunque”, lines 09 and 11), probably because expectations were too high (“poi sai ti crei quest’immagine del del /negozio perfetto”, lines 13 and 15). Expressing our disappointment towards a store specifically targeted to Italian migrants in Perth, Fabio sets the scene for the construction of the identity of ‘real Italian’ that takes place in the following lines. Fabio’s positioning is shared, reinforced and made explicit by Giada in lines 14, 17-18 and 20, “sì perché/ cioè per quelli che sono qua forse/che magari sono stati in Italia/allora hanno vaga reminiscenza ma”. The meaning of her turn is that shops such as the *Re Store* may be representative of the Italian culture for some groups of Italian-Australians, but certainly not for people like her and other participants who know well what ‘real’ Italian food is and tastes like.

The expression she uses “quelli che sono qua” (line 17), is indeed meaningful: the referent of this expression is clearly the category of ‘Italians in Australia’, and to it she opposes the ‘we-group’ of new migrants, through the opposition marker “ma” with which she ends her turn in line 20. As I argue discussing extract 10 below, the ‘physical’ opposition established by Giada between “quelli che sono qua” and the ‘we-group’, is, in fact, an *emotional* one: whereas both new and old migrants live in Australia, the identities performed by new migrants often

suggest that they *feel* and *think* as if they were still living in Italy. As Pasquandrea put it, the emotional epicentre of (new) Italian migrants seems to still be in their home country.

A very similar categorisation pattern can be found in the extract below, previously analysed with regards to old migrants' use of code mixing and reported here for convenience.

(10) *Radio Italia*

(D6: Martina, Ernesto & Bianca, Researcher)

01 M: sometimes i try to listen to the: (0.9)
02 e: the e: italian radio?
03 B: [(x)
04 E: [@
05 M: like sometimes they do (x) e:
06 broadcast some programs from rai-
07 radio †due it's actually pretty good
08 like il ruggito del coni:glio,
09 this is it's funny you know jus you know
10 you just laugh but then, there are these programs
11 for italians that live [in australia
12 Re: [mmh:
13 M: and they are like (1)
14 ((mimicking the voice of an old person))
15 ok now we have to (put)
16 (x) a song of natalino otto
17 Re: ((smiles))
18 M: you know they're all so old these people,
19 B: ((tilts her head and smiles))
20 E: @
21 M: they and they're all these old italians calling
22 that they speak half italian and half english
23 E: @
24 B: @

As noted above, Martina is discussing here the positives and the negatives of *Radio Italia*. The identity work she carries out in the first part of the extract is fascinating, as it showcases the different means, from the more subtle to the more explicit ones, available to speakers to perform and negotiate identities in interaction. Similarly to the pattern analysed in the extract above, the opposition between old and new migrants is transformed here into the one between the categories of Italian migrant and real Italian.

In line 01 Martina starts working towards her positioning as a 'real Italian': as she explains later in the conversation *Radio Italia* is very popular among Italian-Australians, a social group from which Martina is keen to discursively differentiate herself. For this reason, in line 01, she does not say that she *listens* to *Radio Italia*, rather, she says that she *tries* to listen to it, implying that this is something that requires some sort of *effort* on the part of a young Italian

migrant like her. Fabio demonstrates he understands this implication of Martina's words with his laughter in line 03.

In line 04, Martina begins explaining what she likes and what she does not like about the radio station: she begins with the positives, saying that sometimes they broadcast programs such as *Il ruggito del coniglio*, 'The roar of the rabbit', from the Italian radio station *Radio Due* and showing her appreciation for the program (see lines 07-09, "it's actually pretty good", "it's funny"). On the one hand, therefore, Martina likes *Radio Italia* as it offers Italian migrants the opportunity to listen to radio programs that 'real Italians' listen to; on the other, however, the radio also broadcasts shows for "Italians that live in Australia" (line 10-11), which she does not seem to appreciate as much.

She introduces this other aspect of *Radio Italia* with the opposition marker "but then" (10), thus signalling a contrast with the positive comments expressed until then about the radio station, and then goes on explaining why she does not like the programs for "Italians that live in Australia". Interestingly enough, as I comment below, despite the fact that she *does* live in Australia, she is clearly positioning herself in contrast with the category of people who do so by expressing her negative comments on the programs targeted to them. She constructs the category of 'Italians who live in Australia' mainly through the categorisation device of age: in lines 15 and 16 she imitates the radio speaker, and the voice she puts on is high pitched and croaky, like the one of an old person; moreover, the singer she mentions, Natalino Otto (line 16), was very popular in Italy in the 1940s and 1950s, the years of mass migration to Australia, whereas he is very little known in contemporary Italy; finally, she makes her point explicit in line 18, where she refers to Italian migrants who listen to *Radio Italia* with the expression "they are all so old".

The identity that Martina has performed so far, therefore, is that of 'real Italian', taking a distance from the one of 'Italian migrant in Australia': she often struggles to listen to *Radio Italia*, a radio station specifically targeted to Italian migrants (line 01), she appreciates it only when they broadcast programs from a 'real' Italian radio station (lines 05-10), and finds it boring when they do shows for Italians in Australia (lines 13-16 and 18).

As mentioned commenting extract 17, we observe a discrepancy between the physical location of new migrants, that is their living in Australia, and the conversational positioning they take up in interaction, that of 'real Italians'. The opposition between Martina and the category of 'Italians who live in Australia', echoes the words of Giada in extract 17 above: in both instances, new migrants seem to emotionally perceive themselves as if they were still living in Italy.

On a different note, with reference to the changes occurred on a global scale between the end of mass migration and the start of new migration flows (see Chapter II), it is also likely

that new opportunities offered by telecommunication technologies, as in the case of the Italian radio show broadcast by *Radio Italia*, could play a role in encouraging and supporting the survival of this identity trait in new Italian migrants.

To conclude this section, I present an extract in which the opposition between old and new migrants is performed on the ground of participants' proficiency in the Italian language. The extract below represents under some aspects a *unicum* in the corpus as, it is from the first pilot study I carried out at the beginning of my data collection, and therefore is an audio recording and is from the only dinner that was not held at my house; finally, and more importantly for the sake of the present analysis, it is the only dinner which saw the participation of a second-generation Italian-Australian, even if only for the last half hour or so. As discussed in Chapter III, for the dinners I organised I limited the recruitment to recent first-generation migrants because this is the primary focus of the present work, but on this occasion the meeting was not held at my house, therefore I had somehow less control on the situation. Tony and Leila, friends of the host, Angus, happened to arrive while we were about to finish our dinner and joined us for dessert. As I discuss below, this unexpected addition to the group turned out to provide very interesting results in terms of identity work.

(18) 'Germanese'

(D1: *Tony & Leila, Amanda, Martina, Researcher*)

01 T: sono capre de vusc de b- come se dice de vosco.
02 sono bush cap[re
03 Am: [yeah yeah
04 M: [bush goats
05 T: capre de vo- de vosco
06 Am: capre (.)di bosco [yeah
07 T: [yeah
08 Am: [selvagge
09 T: [propria a:- a a a- (1.3)
10 ((clicks his tongue)) (.) anamali@
11 Re: selvatiche
12 T: selvagge that's the word (.) y'know? selvaggi ah-
13 and a- appena che ci vai vicino no?
14 they don't come near you tha- tha- s'allontanano=
15 =they don't wanna (know) [tha-
16 M: [yeah yeah yeah
17 Am: yeah no they're scared
18 T: see lily now she's a- addomesticata no
19 M: [yeah yeah
20 Am: [yeah
21 T: you know? this is bush goat y'know they're different
22 y'know as soon as they see you (.) you know they go
23 Am: they run away
24 T: ((to Leila)) sorry (x) i'm speaking a bit of english
25 [(x) trying to (.) break it all up a bit
26 L: [tha's ok

27 T: germ- germanesi.
 28 (0.8)
 29 Am: giapponese?
 30 T: germanesi.
 31 Re: [@
 32 Am: [ah:: g-
 33 ((to Leila))are you german?
 34 T: german.
 35 Am: ah s- in italia(n) we say (.) tedesco.
 36 T: tedesco?
 37 Am: tedesco, no germanese

01 T: *they're bush goats b- how do you say bush.*
 02 *they're bush go[ats*
 03 Am: [yeah yeah
 04 M: [bush goats
 05 T: *b- bush goats*
 06 Am: *goats (.) of (.) the bush [yeah*
 07 T: [yeah
 08 Am: [untamed
 09 T: [real a:- a-a-a- (1.3)
 10 ((flicks his tongue))(.) animals@
 11 Re: undomesticated
 12 T: *untamed that's the word (.) youknow? untamed ah-*
 13 *and a- as soon as you go near y'know?*
 14 *they don't come near you tha- tha- they go away=*
 15 *=they don't wanna (know)[tha-*
 16 M: [yeah yeah yeah
 17 Am: yeah no they're scared
 18 T: see lily now she's a- *domesticated y'know*
 19 M: [yeah yeah
 20 Am: [yeah
 21 T: you know? this is bush goat y'know they're different y'know
 22 as soon as they see you (.) you know they go
 23 Am: they run away
 24 T: ((to Leila)) sorry (x) i'm speaking a bit of english=
 25 =[(xx) trying to (.) break it all up a bit
 26 L: [tha's ok
 27 T: germ- germanese
 28 (0.8)
 29 Am: *japanese?*
 30 T: *germanese*
 31 Re: [@
 32 Am: [a:: g-
 33 ((to Leila))are you german?
 34 T: german.
 35 Am: *oh y- in italy/ italian we say (.) tedesco.*
 36 T: *tedesco?*
 37 Am: *tedesco, no germanese*

Tony, born from Calabrese parents, is a second-generation Italian-Australian in his late thirties; he has some degree of proficiency in Italian, even though he speaks a very mixed variety, with strong influences from the Calabrese dialect. In the first part of the extract above, he is talking

about his goats, explaining to other participants that they are ‘bush goats’, not used to being in contact with people. In lines 01-12 he looks for a translation of the English expression ‘bush goat’ (“come se dice”, line 01)¹³⁷, and other participants, Italian native speakers, cooperate helping him to overcome his *impasse*: in lines 03 and 04, for example, Amanda (“yeah yeah”) and Martina (“bush goats”), express their support to Tony by respectively showing that they understand what he means and allowing the use of the English expression. Tony, however, is determined to find the right Italian equivalent, and in line 05 makes another attempt “capre de vo- de vosco”, in which the standard form *di* is replaced by the diatopic form *de* and the fricative /v/ substitutes the plosive /b/ in the word *bosco*. This time, Amanda’s reply provides Tony with the standard Italian equivalent “capre di bosco” (line 06), even though in line 08 she adds a more appropriate definition, “selvagge”. Although her turn in line 08 overlaps with Tony’s, he must have heard Amanda’s suggestion, because the word “selvagge”, ‘wild’, echoes again in line 12, in which he accepts, modifying it at the same time, my proposal “selvatiche” (line 11). My turn in line 11 can be seen as a repair to Amanda’s turn in line 08, as in standard Italian the word *selvatiche* is more suitable than *selvagge* to refer to animals.

Satisfied with the Italian equivalent finally agreed upon by participants, Tony proceeds with his narrative, constantly switching from English to Italian and *vice versa* (lines 12-22). In lines 24-25 he turns his attention to his girlfriend Leila and apologises with her for his mixing English and Italian, “sorry i’m speaking a bit of english/trying to break it all up a bit”. He then pronounces the turn in line 27, “germ- germanesi”, which, as the pause in line 28 suggests, other participants struggle to understand. With the word “germanesi”, he is referring to Leila’s German nationality by using a morphologically integrated transfer: he modified the English adjective ‘German’ by adding the Italian suffix *-ese* (pronounced [ezi]), typically used for adjectives denoting nationality. At first, the use of this integrated transfer, together with the abrupt change in topic, makes it difficult for other participants to understand what he is saying, as confirmed by Amanda’s attempt in line 29, “giapponese”. Tony then repeats the expression (line 30), and Amanda finally understands the word and what it refers to (see her response cry in line 32) and seeks confirmation of her understanding asking Leila if she is German (line 33).

Amanda showed from the beginning of the narrative that she was particularly engaged in the conversation and determined to help Tony with his Italian: for this reason, once she receives Tony’s confirmation, “german”, line 34, she produces the turn in line 35 “ah s- in italia(n) we say tedesco”. This line, despite the slight uncertainty in its interpretation, offers several points of interest for the analysis. The very first part of Amanda’s turn is incomplete, but we can easily infer that her response cry stands for *ah sì*, ‘oh yes’, to confirm that she now

¹³⁷ For the relevance that the “ricerca di parole”, ‘search for words’, has for the negotiation of discursive identities in a similar context see Margutti 2007.

understands what Tony meant; it is important to note that she starts her turn in Italian. The middle section of the turn is a crucial point, although its interpretation is somewhat problematic: from the recording, she seems to say “in italia”, even though the interpretation ‘in Italian’, which would be slightly more fitting with the context, cannot be excluded with certainty. Also, if we follow the former hypothesis, “in italia”, we should locate the switch point to English after this section of the turn, whereas in the latter case, the initial “ah s-” would represent a false start, after which she switches to English.

The hypothesis of her saying “in italia”, however, not only is the most likely based on the recording, it also allows for a fascinating reflection. By saying ‘in italia we say tedesco’, Amanda positions herself very similarly to what we saw other participants doing in extracts 10 and 17, that is, as ‘real Italians’ as opposed to Italian migrants. This time, the ground on which this opposition is constructed is language proficiency: whereas until then Amanda had performed the identity of ‘expert’ on standard Italian (see lines 06 and 08), foregrounding her status as a native speaker, she now goes one step further and ascribes herself to the ‘we-group’ of ‘those who *are* in Italy’.

A similar interpretation would still be valid even if we consider the option “in italian”: rather than using a more neutral expression, such as the impersonal ‘in Italian you say’, she uses the ‘we-code’ of real Italians (“we say tedesco”), thus ascribing herself to the group of those who are entitled to give suggestions and corrections about standard Italian as opposed to the one of second-generation migrants like Tony. To this, the hypothesis “in italia” would add the further point of interest of the physical-emotional displacement that seems to characterise new Italian migrants.

5.2.1 Identities at (re-)play

In the sections above I analysed instances of talk in which participants, through their conversational positioning, constructed a gap between them and old migrants. The identity work they carried out suggests that they sometimes feel and think like ‘real Italians’, as opposed to ‘Italian migrants’. Interactional identity, however, is, by definition, shifting, multifaceted and context related. It is not surprising, therefore, that the corpus also presents instances of talk in which interactants perform identities that bring them closer to old migrants, revealing instead the gap between them and ‘real Italians’, that is Italians who actually live in Italy.

In quantitative terms, instances of these identity performances are far less frequent than the ones analysed above, but their presence is a significant confirmation of the ‘fluid’ nature of interactional identity. In the following section I therefore present two extracts where these patterns are particularly evident and I compare and contrast them to some of the passages

analysed in the previous pages.

Analysing extract 16 I discussed how Martina deployed the category of 'wog' to create an opposition to the 'we-group' of new migrants; interestingly enough, in the following extract from the same dinner, this same person uses the same category marker in an altogether different way.

(19) The 'wogs' table

(D6: Martina, Bianca, Researcher)

01 M: and then(.)that's not much fun at all with australians
02 they sit there and they tend not to:
03 i have been to this baby shower, and believe me
04 i saw so much the difference
05 we had a: like e: the the girls like
06 future mum's family,
07 they're dutch but they're from here,
08 B: yeah
09 M: so all the friends are (.) dutch and and
10 or australian while Angus'eh †cousin the future dad,
11 is half italian, as my boyfriend,
12 B: ah ok
13 M: so all the family, they're actually second generation
14 italian so you could see
15 there was a big table with all blond g- chicks
16 B: @
17 M: and then there was a huge table,
18 and it was so funny cause i saw them from the distance
19 all dark hair ((hand gesture))
20 Re: @
21 M: and (xx) Angus' cousin went
22 ((hand gesture)) come come, come to the wogs=
23 ((turns to Re)) =sai(xx)they're all like
24 very dark and stuff
25 and ahm: they didn't mix at all
26 nobody introduced themse:lves [or you know?
27 B: [(x)
28 M: is just buh i don't know
29 B: mmh

In the turns preceding this extract, participants were talking about the differences between socialisation among Australians and among Italians, and Martina, in particular, expressed very clearly her preference for Italian-style socialisation. In lines 01 and 02, she explains that she finds going out with Australians not very entertaining: "and then that's not much fun at all with australians". She supports her stance with the example of a baby-shower party she attended that day during which she could observe the differences ("i have been to this baby shower, and believe me/i saw so much the difference", lines 03 and 04) in the pattern of socialisation

between Italians, or, as she clarifies later in the conversation (lines 13-14), Italian-Australians, and Dutch-Australians (lines 06-10).

It is interesting to note that whereas both families are multigenerational migrant families, Martina presents the future mother's Dutch-Australian family as strongly 'Australianised', and the future father's Italian-Australian one as inherently Italian. In line 07, for example, referring to the mother's family, she says "they're dutch but they are from here", thus suggesting an assimilation of being Dutch and being Australian; she presents instead the father as "half italian", line 11, stressing only the Italian component of his 'hyphenated identity' (Giampapa 2001). Moreover, whereas in line 09 she says that most of the mother's *friends* are Dutch or Australian, in line 13, referring to the father's *family*, she says that "they're actually second generation Italian".

The way Martina constructs the opposition between the two families is therefore functional to the context of the interaction, that is, the contraposition between Italians and Australians with regards to socialisation; however, it also supports the findings about migrant communities in Australia according to which the Dutch tend to become assimilated into Australian society and switch to English considerably faster than the Italians (see section 2.2.2 in Chapter II). Moreover, whereas for the Dutch-Australian woman Martina puts emphasis on her friends (line 09), for the Italian-Australian man she mentions his family (line 13), as if to highlight the difference between Dutch and Italians with regards to the value of family ties (see section 2.3.1 in Chapter II).

After having clarified the context of the interaction, Martina then goes to describe the table setting at the party, stressing in particular the physical appearance of the two groups: a *big* table with "all blond chicks" (line 15) on one side, and a *huge* table of people, "all dark hair" (line 19), on the other. Given that Martina has very dark, black hair, the emphasis on hair colour gives away what will be her final positioning: in lines 18-19 she describes the scene positioning herself as an outsider "and it was so funny cause I saw them /from the distance", but in line 22 she is promptly welcomed by the future father at "the wogs' table". In line 23, "*they* are all very dark and stuff", using the third person plural, she still does not include herself in the group of 'wogs', but we can infer from the context of the interaction that she was quite happy to join the "wogs" table rather than the "blond chicks" one.

We should bear in mind that the whole narrative was aimed at proving the point she made earlier (line 01) that going out with Australians "is not much fun": therefore, her comments in lines 25 "they didn't mix at all", and 26 "nobody introduced themselves", are to be intended as a criticism towards Australians, or Dutch-Australians, as these lines seem to represent the logical conclusion of the sentence she left unfinished prior to the beginning of her

narrative (“they just sit there and tend not to”, line 02). Compared to Italians, therefore, Australians are seen by Martina as unfriendly, un-chatty and boring people who, when going out, tend to just “sit there and *not mix with others*”.

As for the interplay between identity categories, in extract 16 above we saw that Martina used the marker ‘wog’ to establish a clear separation between the categories of old and new Italian migrants; in extract 19, instead, the Italian-Australian man projects on her the identity of ‘wog’, and, despite her turn in line 23 in which she refers to ‘wogs’ with the third person plural, the way she structures her narrative suggests that this time Martina is quite happy to belong to the category of ‘wogs’. The contrast between these two episodes illustrates the shifting and locally originated nature of interactional identity: whereas in the context of the opposition between old and new migrants (extract 16) the category ‘wog’ represented the *other*, opposed to the ‘we-group’, in the second episode, where the contraposition is now between the *dark* Italian-Australians and the *blond* Dutch-Australians, being ‘wog’ becomes a criterion of inclusion and, as far as socialisation is concerned, something to be proud of.

Finally, the next extract is emblematic with regards to the processes of rejection/acceptance of identities in conversation; through the interplay between the categories of ‘real Italian’ and ‘Italian migrant’, it also showcases the ‘fluid’ nature of identities negotiated in interaction.

(20) Rotoloni Regina and Pennello Cinghiale

(D1: Martina, Amanda & Davide, Fabio & Researcher)

01 M: se avete bisogno c'è: ci sono altre tovagliette là eh
02 e:h quel rotolone il roto- rotolone
03 Am: rotoloni regina non finiscono mai.
04 M: che quello lì è anche un pochino più assorbente
05 D: ormai (.) è vecchia quella pubblicità in italia.
06 Am: e che ne so([[s]]) davide io so-([[so]])@
07 ((general laughter))
08 M: te lo ricord- ve la ricordate la pubblicità
09 del pennello cinghiale?
10 Re: [sì: per dipingere una parete grande
11 Am: [mmh]
12 ((general laughter))
13 Am: ma la fanno ancora?
14 F: l'hanno riproposta:
15 M: sì l'han ripropo:sta [è vero
16 F: [un paio d'anni fa
17 Re: ahm:
18 M: gliel'avevo anche raccontata ad angus (0.7)
19 angus, do you remember that commercial
20 that i was telling you about, about the: (.) brush

01 M: *if you need it there is: there are more serviettes there eh*

accepting and reinforcing the identity of Italian migrant: given the context of the interaction, it can be argued that the meaning of the incomplete utterance in line 06 is that of *io sono qui in Australia*, 'I am here in Australia', or *io sono emigrata*, 'I migrated'.

Amanda, however, must find this situation quite challenging, as we can infer from the fact that she does not say it explicitly but leaves the sentence incomplete and demands to laughter the task of implying such a confronting idea. This instance supports the idea of laughter as a means to exorcise fears, tackle confronting situations and solve conversational impasse, as the literature on the topic confirms (Jefferson, 1984; Zorzi 1990; Glenn 2013).

The second part of extract number 20 provides a further confirmation of the fact that, in this interaction, Amanda has given up her role as 'expert' and has accepted the identity of Italian migrant. In lines 08 and 09, "te lo ricord- ve la ricordate la pubblicità /del pennello cinghiale", Martina introduces another popular Italian TV commercial, that of a brand of brushes, *Pennelli Cinghiale*, 'Wild Boar Brushes'. She initially seems to select only one recipient for her turn¹³⁸, but then produces a self-repair and switches to the second person plural, thus addressing all Italian interlocutors at the table, as Angus was probably busy in the kitchen. In line 10, "sì per dipingere una parete grande", I give a positive response and start quoting part of the slogan of the commercial¹³⁹. Amanda's response in line 11 is also a sign of agreement, even though this time she is very cautious not to expose her *face* too much: on the contrary, by asking whether the commercial is still aired on Italian TV ("ma la fanno ancora", line 13), she admits her ignorance on the topic and acknowledges the fact that people at the table who moved to Australia more recently than her might be more up-to-date. Fabio, who, with me, is the person who left Italy most recently, promptly responds to her cue ("l'hanno riproposta/un paio di anni fa", lines 14 and 16) and Martina also gives her approval to Fabio's response overlapping with his speech in line 15 "sì l'han riproposta è vero". They both agree that the old advertisement was aired again on Italian TV a couple of years ago, when Amanda had already left Italy.

In conclusion, the topic of Italian TV commercials creates a background against which participants can negotiate their identities. Amanda's identity work appears as the most complex and fascinating one. Whereas she starts off in this extract by presenting herself as an expert about Italy (line 03), she then has to accept the challenge that her husband Davide poses to her identity (line 05) and admit that she may have fallen behind due to her move to Australia (06). She finally positions herself as migrant and acknowledges the others' role of experts by asking whether the commercial of the brushes is still on (line 13).

¹³⁸ As dinner was audio recorded, I cannot resort to the video to ascertain which one of the participants she is addressing with her false start in line 08.

¹³⁹ The catch-phrase of the commercial of these brushes is "Per dipingere una parete grande ci vuole un pennello grande. No, non ci vuole un pennello grande, ma un grande pennello", 'To paint a big wall you need a big brush. No, you don't need a big brush, but a great brush'.

It seems worthwhile to conclude this analysis with another note on Amanda's identity performances emerging from the comparison of the extract above and extract 18. Amanda's interaction with Tony showed very clearly her positioning as 'real Italian' as opposed to Tony's identity of second-generation migrant. Even though other Italians were present, she then felt confident enough in her knowledge of the Italian language to consistently perform the role of expert on the topic by helping Tony in his search for Italian words and by correcting his broken speech. In extract 20, instead, not only is the topic different, but, despite the fact that both extracts belong to the same dinner, the composition of the group taking part in the conversation has also changed: other than Angus, who during the exchange was busy cooking in the kitchen, all other participants at the table are young Italians who moved to Australia even more recently than Amanda. For this reason, the identity categories made relevant in this second exchange are different and, as discussed above, the negotiation of Amanda's identity between her, Davide and other participants leads to a positioning that contrasts with the one she took up for herself in extract 18.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter we have seen how the discursive creation of the opposition between the categories of 'new migrant' and 'old migrant' was one of the most frequent patterns to recur in the corpus. In section 5.1 I commented on the fact that participants demonstrated a strong awareness of their belonging to a new and different phenomenon to the one of old Italian migration to Australia, and I argued that this awareness itself accounts for the relevance and necessity of studies that specifically tackle contemporary Italian migration. A common way to discursively express this opposition is the frequent selection of the categorisation device of age to describe old migrants and their language (see extracts 5, 8, 9 and 10); adverbs and other expressions of time are also deployed by participants with a similar function, as they often indexicalised old Italian migration to Australia through expressions referring to the past and new migration flows through ones referring to the present (see extracts 1, 2, 3a and 3b).

A significant part of this awareness relates to the linguistic characterisation of old migrants: their language is perceived as intrinsically 'other' from the one spoken by new migrants, and is often target of jokes and humour. Nonetheless, I have showed how participants have sometimes played with this 'otherness' putting on new migrants' jargon in the form of integrated lexical transfers (extracts 11, 12 and 13).

As for section 5.2, I presented instances of talk in which participants negotiated their identities through the use of the categories of 'old migrant', 'new migrant', and 'real Italian', and I argued that the two latter categories were often assimilated as opposed to the former. A

means to construct this assimilation that significantly recurred several times in the corpus is a somewhat 'dysfunctional' use of adverbs or other expressions of place (extracts 10, 17 and 18): participants' use of these linguistic features suggests an emotional displacement typical of migrant discourse (Baynham and De Fina 2005; Baynham 2006). Moreover, laughter proved a powerful means to both express disaffiliation from a given social group (extract 10), and to solve conversational impasse (extract 20).

The interplay between the three categories of 'old migrant', 'new migrant', and 'real Italian', however, also confirmed the locally-originated and shifting nature of identities constructed in interaction, as I have shown how these categories were often shuffled and revisited according to the context (notion of context as in Auer and Di Luzio 1992; Duranti and Goodwin 1992). Among the factors that I foregrounded as influencing the context of the interaction there are participants' transportable identities (Zimmerman 1998), as in extract 18, which involved a second-generation Italian migrant, and the topic discussed, as emerged from the comparison of extracts 18 and 20.

Chapter VI

Italian *campanilismo* across the ocean: the negotiation of regional and sub-regional identities in interaction

Introduction

In chapter IV I discussed the negotiation of interactional identity with regards to the opposition between the broader categories of Italian and Australian ethnic identities; in chapter V, I focused on the Italian-Australian community and I analysed the interplay between the identities of 'new migrant' and 'old migrant'; in this third analytic chapter I narrow the focus further, limiting the analysis to the group of new migrants and discussing how during the dinner parties participants constructed and negotiated their Italian regional and sub-regional identities in interaction.

As presented in Chapter III, the sample of participants included people from many different Italian regions. Their regional and sub-regional identities were often brought up in conversation, either to proudly express affiliation to a specific geographical area or linguistic community, or, on the contrary, to take a distance from their native region or town.

The means through which participants foregrounded their sub-national identities in conversation vary widely, and so does the ground on which they based the opposition between different Italian regions or towns: a very common pattern, for instance, is the discussion of linguistic items – words or phrases – of regional Italian or dialectal origin (De Fina 2007a).

A more subtle way in which regional identities were often constructed in interaction is the discursive creation of 'we-groups' (De Cillia 1999), mainly through the use of personal pronouns, to express one's affiliation to a specific community or to mark an opposition between different parties within the group of participants.

Moreover, the negotiation of regional and sub-regional identities is often characterised by a sarcastic or humorous tone, possibly as a way to soften the face-threatening nature of the positioning taken up or of the expressions used.

Finally, another significant aspect of the construction of regional identity is the status that dialect holds in the linguistic repertoire of new migrants. One of the main points of interest, I would argue, is the reported use of dialect in written communication through technological means such as e-mails or online chats. Not only does this represent a fascinating opposition between dialect's connotation as traditional and somewhat archaic and modern and technological communication, it also sparks encouraging insights into the role that new means of written communication can play in the maintenance of dialect among Italian migrants.

Whereas the frequency with which participants reported using dialect is somewhat surprising in itself, even more fascinating is the way they described their disposition and their

feelings towards it. In the excerpts below dialect is often presented as a ‘language of the heart’, a means through which speakers can connect with their ‘roots’ and really ‘say what they mean’. Dialect seems to acquire even more significance for migrants, as it allows them to strengthen their sense of transnational belonging.

Given the quantitative and qualitative significance of data about dialect in the corpus, I divided this chapter into two sections: section 6.1 specifically targets the role of dialect in the linguistic practices of new migrants and its significance towards the construction of regional identities, whereas section 6.2 addresses interactive performances of regional and sub-regional identities. As for the two previous analytic chapters, in the first section I adopt a more discourse-analytic approach, whereas the second one represents a more technical, conversation-analytic study.

6.1 Dialect in the linguistic practices of new migrants: a ‘language of the heart’ between tradition and innovation

Recent studies (Kinder 2009, Rubino 2009b) suggest that, in the last decade or so, the decline of Italian dialects may have come to a halt and that dialects are experiencing a ‘resurgence’ in contemporary Italy. The limited sample on which the present research is based seems to support the image of Italian dialects as vital languages: most participants mentioned they used dialect at home before migrating and reported that they maintained dialect even after migrating to Australia, often considering it the first choice in written and oral communication with family and friends. In fact, the only participants who said they did not use dialect prior to migration are those whose parents are from different Italian regions¹⁴⁰.

However, there seems to be a difference in the frequency of dialect use between people from different regions; the following extract, for instance, shows the different vitality of dialect among *Veneti*, that is, people from the Veneto region, and Lombards.

(1) Veneti e Lombardi

(D2: Giada, Fernando, Fabio and Researcher)

01 G: e invece tornando alla lingua, ((looks at Re))
02 Re: mmmh
03 G: io ho fatto caso che: una la prima lingua che mi viene
04 quando parlo con i miei genitori e così è il dialetto
05 Re: mm? ((raising eyebrows))
06 F: sì?
07 G: sì. e anche mio cugino che: ci chattavamo:
08 lui dal giappone che a a era

¹⁴⁰ This group includes Fabio, half from the Campania region and half Lombard, Fernando, half Lombard and half Venetian, Valeria, half Sicilian and half Venetian, and myself, half Lombard and half from the Puglia region.

09 >ora è tornato a casa hhh < dopo il disastro
 10 Re: [ah giusto
 11 G: [ma dopo dopo anni che era là,
 12 e quindi ci sentivamo, dialetto.
 13 Re: sì:?
 14 F: [cavoli
 15 G: [ma (x) dialetto [(x)
 16 Re: [ma tu a casa parlavi il dialetto
 17 in famiglia
 18 G: in casa mia sì abbastanza
 19 Re: sì? ((nodding))
 20 G: sì.
 21 F: cavoli che: [che cosa
 22 Re: [tu Fernando ((pointing at Fe))
 23 Fe: no [noi:=
 24 Re: [zero ((shakes head))
 25 Fe: =il dialetto da noi ((hands together in front of him,
 26 going up and down))
 27 Re: [no appunto volevo giusto perché è proprio diverso
 28 Fe: [i miei nonni
 29 Re: per lo meno in lombardia:
 30 Fe: in lombardia zero

01 G: *and instead going back to language, ((looks at Re))*
 02 Re: *mmm*
 03 G: *i noticed that: one the first language that comes to me*
 04 *when i talk to my parents and stuff is dialect*
 05 Re: *mm? ((raising eyebrows))*
 06 F: *yes?*
 07 G: *yes. And my cousin also that: we were chatting online:*
 08 *he from japan that a a was*
 09 *>now he's gone back home hhh < after the disaster*
 10 Re: *[oh right*
 11 G: *[but after after years he spent there,*
 12 *and so we were in touch, dialect.*
 13 Re: *yeah:?*
 14 F: *[gosh*
 15 G: *[but (x) dialect [(x)*
 16 Re: *[but did you use dialect at home*
 17 *with you family*
 18 G: *in my household yes quite a bit*
 19 Re: *yeah? ((nodding))*
 20 G: *yes.*
 21 F: *gosh what: [what a thing*
 22 Re: *[you Fernando ((pointing at Fe))*
 23 Fe: *no [we:=*
 24 Re: *[nothing ((shakes head))*
 25 Fe: *=dialect for us ((hands together in front of him,*
 26 *going up and down))*
 27 *[no exactly i just wanted because it's very different*
 28 Fe: *[my grandparents*
 29 Re: *at least in lombardy:*
 30 Fe: *in lombardy nothing*

In the passage above, Giada talks about her use of dialect when communicating with her family. Her turn in line 01 is particularly meaningful for the *framing* of the episode: as we can infer from her gaze, she is selecting me as addressed recipient of her turn and is making my identity of researcher relevant, thus suggesting that she is about to say something she considers relevant to my study. Her turn in lines 03 shows her awareness of her linguistic behaviours, “io ho fatto caso che”, and presents her use of dialect not as a conscious choice but rather as something that comes to her naturally and spontaneously, “la prima lingua che mi viene”. This latter reflection implies the idea of dialect as ‘language of the heart’, as the most intimate and genuine way of expressing someone’s feelings and thoughts (see also extract 4 below).

In lines 07-12 Giada adds that she also uses dialect in online chats with her cousin (“e anche mio cugino che ci chattavamo”¹⁴¹, line 07), who lived in Japan for a few years before going back to Italy after the nuclear explosion in Fukushima in 2011 (“lui dal giappone che a a era/ora è tornato a casa dopo il disastro”, lines 08 and 09). The fact that she mentions her cousin, a migrant himself, may suggest that she ascribes dialect a special significance for migrants in particular. In fact, a few minutes after the conversation above, Fabio and Giada will describe the role and meaning of dialect to them in the following terms:

- 01 F: è come: cercare di recuperare:
 02 non lo so di: (.) quella cosa i-
 03 ((puts hands in front of him as if to form a core))
 04 la cosa più [intima no,
 05 G: [la radice
 06 F: la radice esatto
- 01 F: *it's like: trying to reach:*
 02 *don't know to: (.) that thing i-*
 03 *((moves hands in front of him as if to form a core))*
 04 *the most [intimate thing no,*
 05 G: *[the roots*
 06 F: *the roots exactly*

The reference to “la radice” (line 05), ‘the root’, appears particularly meaningful, given the context of migration (Bettoni and Rubino 1996): for migrants, dialect seems to acquire even more emotional value, as it represents a sort of connection between them and their past, their home country and their ‘roots’.

Going back to extract 1, in lines 16-17 I ask Giada and Fernando whether they used dialect in their household before moving to Australia, and whereas Giada says that she did (“in casa mia sì abbastanza” line 18), Fernando gives a negative answer (lines 23 and 25). Interestingly, in his reply he seems to present the fact that he did not use dialect at home as a

¹⁴¹ It is worth noting that, differently from the transfers discussed in section 5.1.2, the transfer *chattare* (<to chat + the ending of the infinitive *-are*) is commonly used in contemporary Italian to refer to online chats.

linguistic feature of the geographic area he was living in¹⁴², rather than referring it specifically to the linguistic practices of his family. As I argue in the lines below, the cues for this inference are his use of the pronoun *noi* in lines 23 and 25, and other non-verbal cues made available by the video.

When I ask him if he used dialect at home, “tu Fernando”, line 22, he replies with “no noi”, line 23, but after the overlap with my turn in line 24, “zero”, he starts again in line 25 with “il dialetto da noi”, supporting his words with a hand gesture. Whereas the referent of the pronoun *noi* in line 23, I would argue, is likely to be his family of origin, he then picks up my agreement in line 24 and, remembering that Fernando and I are from the same region, in line 25 he switches to using *noi* as a marker of the ‘we-group’ of the *Milanesi* or *Lombardi*. The intonation of his utterance and his hand gesture in line 25 imply the idea of something that is lost or no longer in use. In the lines that follow Fernando and I reinforce our agreement (lines 27-30), making it clear that we are ascribing the decline of dialect to a more general regional trend¹⁴³. The extract above can therefore be considered an example of the uneven vitality of different Italian dialects and shows how the migratory context reflects the situation in the home land: those dialects which are more vital in the context of origin are maintained by participants after migrating to Australia both in their oral and written communication with family and friends (D’Agostino 2007).

The use of dialect in written communication, in e-mails and online messaging systems in particular, came up several times during the dinners and represents a point of great interest both from the perspective of migrants’ identity and from that of language maintenance. The topic, briefly mentioned by Giada in line 07 of the extract above, “e anche mio cugino che ci chattavamo”, is discussed in more detail later on during the same dinner:

(2) Le mail in dialetto I

‘The e-mails in dialect’

(D2: Giada, Fernando, Fabio and Researcher)

01 G: io ve- anche con i miei amici che parlano dialetto?
02 ciòè io:
03 Re: mmm?

¹⁴² Even though I met Fernando in Perth, he is originally from an Italian town neighbouring my own hometown of Legnano, in the province of Milan. This is particularly relevant with regards to the analysis of his turn in lines 23-24.

¹⁴³ In the conversation that follows, however, not included in the transcript, I ask Fernando whether his parents are both from the Lombardy region and he answers that while his father is *lombardo*, his mother is *veneta*. The fact that his parents are from different Italian regions, which applies also to my family of origin, can certainly account for the lack of dialect use in the household, even though in this instance Fernando and I seem to ascribe it to a general pattern of our region of origin.

04 G: io scrivo scrivo in dialetto
 05 mia mamma ha fatto le prime mail ((inhalés))
 06 dialetto dialetto ((shaking her head))e mi fa:
 07 F: le mail ((raising eyebrows))
 08 Fe: le mail hhh
 09 G: le mail.
 10 Re: oddio: @
 11 F: no: guarda che sare- sarebbero da dottorato solo que-
 12 analisi delle barzelle- delle barzell @
 13 G: [@
 14 Re: [le barzellette @ ((moving her hand up and down,
 15 fingers grouped in the middle))
 16 Fe: @ delle mail
 17 F: [delle mail in dialetto
 18 G: [delle mail in dialetto
 19 mia mamma fa mi ha detto
 20 ascoltarlo è una cosa ma leggerlo
 21 [con tutti sti apostrofi @ ste cose=
 22 Re: [@
 23 G: perché [tagli tutto no così
 24 F: [@
 25 Fe: [e sì
 26 G: mi fa leggerlo non è non è facile hh
 27 Re: [@
 28 Fe: [@

01 G: *i se- also with my friends who speak dialect?*
 02 *i mean i:*
 03 Re: *mmm?*
 04 G: *i write write in dialect*
 05 *my mum wrote the first e-mails ((inhalés))*
 06 *dialect dialect ((shaking her head)) and she goes:*
 07 F: *e-mails ((raising eyebrows))*
 08 Fe: *e-mails hhh*
 09 G: *e-mails.*
 10 Re: *oh god: @*
 11 F: *no: look they would- they would be worth a doctorate them-*
 12 *analysis of the jok- of the jokes @*
 13 G: *[@*
 14 Re: *[the jokes @ ((moving her hand up and down, fingers*
 15 *grouped in the middle))*
 16 Fe: *@ of the e-mails*
 17 F: *[of the e-mails in dialect*
 18 G: *[of the e-mails in dialect*
 19 *my mum went she told me*
 20 *listening to it is one thing but reading it*
 21 *[with all these apostrophes @ these things=*
 22 Re: *[@*
 23 G: *because [you cut everything no like that*
 24 F: *[@*
 25 Fe: *[yes*
 26 G: *she went reading it is not is not easy hh*
 27 Re: *[@*
 28 Fe: *[@*

In line 01 of the extract above Giada steps in again to reinforce her positioning as dialect speaker by saying that she uses dialect not only with her family members, but also with her dialect-speaking friends (“io ve- anche con i miei amici che parlano dialetto”). Moreover, she does not use dialect only in oral but also in written communication (“io scrivo scrivo in dialetto”, line 04); this point is further explored in the following lines, when Giada tells other interactants that her mum used dialect in the e-mails she wrote to her when she first moved to Australia (“mia mamma ha fatto le prime mail/dialetto dialetto e mi fa”, lines 05 and 06). This causes a surprised reaction in other participants, who find the use of dialect in e-mails quite unusual (lines 07-10). In fact, whereas e-mails evoke ideas such as ‘innovation’, ‘technological communication’ and ‘globalisation’, dialect is normally perceived as a symbol of tradition, oral communication and parochialism. The ‘e-mail in dialect’, therefore, sounds almost like an oxymoron to the ears of interactants, so much so that Fabio, line 11 argues that this topic would be worth a doctorate in itself (“sarebbero da dottorato solo queste”¹⁴⁴).

In lines 19-21, “mia mamma fa mi ha detto/ascoltarlo è una cosa ma leggerlo/con tutti sti apostrofi @ ste cose”, Giada reports her mum’s words about the difficulty of reading dialect, compared to hearing it spoken. She then goes on to explain why reading and writing the Veronese dialect is so hard, that is, because it requires many diacritical signs, such as apostrophes (line 21), and the writer has to modify many words by ‘cutting’ them (“perché tagli tutto no così”, line 23).

Interestingly enough, this same topic was discussed in another dinner, dinner number 4, and it was introduced by Fernando while talking about an association he used to be part of (lines 01-02 below).

(3) Le mail in dialetto II

(D4: Fernando, Vito, Roberto, Fabio & Researcher)

01 Fe: geologi senza frontiere
 02 è [un'associazione romana
 03 Vi: [e c'avevi delle delle
 04 Fe: (xx) siccome va beh io ero a milano,
 05 la comunicazione principale era via mail no
 06 tra i vari:
 07 Vi: e lo- lo:
 08 Fe: e loro scrivevano hh [in dialetto
 09 Vi: [in romano?
 10 Fe: in romano hh
 11 anche tra di loro no

¹⁴⁴ Although Fabio’s sentence is incomplete, it can easily be inferred that “que-” in line 11 stands for *queste*, ‘these’, and refers to the e-mails in dialect. It is more difficult, instead, to imagine the reason behind his *lapsus linguae* in line 12, where he substitutes the word “barzellette”, ‘jokes’, to that of “mail”. The most likely explanation is that he may have unconsciously changed the unusual pair “le mail in dialetto” into a more familiar and common expression “le barzellette in dialetto”.

12 oh stasera **ce** vediamo: @
 13 R: (x)
 14 F: che poi non è più difficile
 15 R: ma no: ma viene naturale
 16 F: no dico sulla tastiera
 17 Vi: no (xx) (guarda che)
 18 R: perché è tutto abbreviato
 19 Vi: perché è tutto abbreviato [e non:
 20 R: [fai prima
 21 Vi: non devi **pensà** alle cose:
 22 Re: alla fine non [ha suoni strani il romano
 23 Vi: [alle non **c'**hai non **c'**hai nessun:
 24 R: no è molto più (x)
 25 Vi: non c'hai nessun problema grammaticale
 26 perché non c'hai paura de **sbaglià**
 27 o manchi un''H' no quindi
 28 R: [(in) romano corretto
 29 F: [(chissene)
 30 Vi: butti tutto là dentro
 31 (.)

01 Fe: *geologists without borders*
 02 *it's [a roman association*
 03 Vi: *[and you had some some*
 04 Fe: *(xx) since like i was in milan*
 05 *most of the communications were via mail no*
 06 *among the various:*
 07 Vi: *and the- they:*
 08 Fe: *and they would write hh [in dialect*
 09 Vi: *[in roman?*
 10 Fe: *in roman hh*
 11 *also among them no*
 12 *oh tonight we catch up@*
 13 R: (x)
 14 F: *but then again isn't it harder*
 15 R: *no: but it comes natural*
 16 F: *no i mean on the keyboard*
 17 Vi: *no (xx) (look)*
 18 R: *because everything is abbreviated*
 19 Vi: *because everything is abbreviated [e you don't:*
 20 R: *[it's quicker*
 21 Vi: *you don't need to think about things:*
 22 Re: *anyway the roman [doesn't have strange sounds*
 23 Vi: *[about you don't have you don't have any:*
 24 R: *no is a lot more (x)*
 25 Vi: *you don't have any grammatical issue*
 26 *because you're not afraid of making mistakes*
 27 *or you miss an 'H' no so*
 28 R: *[(in) proper roman*
 29 F: *[(who cares)*
 30 Vi: *you chuck everything in there*
 31 (.)

Fernando explains that the association *Geologi senza frontiere*, 'Geologists without borders', is based in Rome (line 02), but includes members from other Italian regions, like him ("siccome va

beh io ero a milano”, line 04), therefore most of the communication happened via e-mail (line 05). He then recounts, giggling, that the Roman members of the association used dialect in their e-mails (“e loro scrivevano hhh in dialetto”, line 08) and, after Vito’s surprised reaction (“in romano”, line 09) Fernando goes on to provide a sample of Roman dialect (“o stasera ce vediamo”, line 12). Fernando’s giggling throughout his speech confirms that he finds the use of dialect in e-mails unusual and funny, and the rising intonation of Vito’s turn in line 09 also suggests that he considers the use of dialect somewhat surprising given the supposedly formal or semi-formal character of the communication between members of an association¹⁴⁵.

In line 14, Fabio, possibly remembering the discussion with Giada in dinner number 2, mentions that it may actually be harder to write in dialect rather than in Italian, but Roberto, a Roman himself, promptly steps in to contradict this hypothesis and to support the use of dialect even in the written form (“ma no ma viene naturale”, line 15). When Fabio clarifies what he means, linking explicitly the use of dialect to modern communication technologies (“no dico sulla tastiera”, line 16), the other Roman at the table, Vito, offers his support to Roberto and argues for the feasibility of writing in dialect with a computer (“no (xx) guarda che”, line 17)¹⁴⁶.

From a conversational point of view, Roberto and Vito start here an interactional partnership, based on their shared regional identity, that will last throughout the whole discussion about the Roman dialect (see extracts 4 and 5 below): the two will support each other’s claims about both the positive and the negative aspects of the Roman dialect by constantly constructing their interactional agreement. Lines 18 and 19 of the extract above are emblematic of such conversational pattern: here it is Vito that shows his support to Roberto by echoing what he just said in the line above (“perché è tutto abbreviato”, line 18).

As for the use of written dialect, interestingly, whereas in extract 2 Giada mentioned the ‘cutting’ necessary to adapt Italian words into her dialect as something that made its written use more difficult, here Roberto and Vito mention the same process of ‘abbreviating’ words to explain why writing in dialect is actually easier and faster (“fai prima”, line 20). In line 25, Vito introduces another aspect in favour of the use of dialect in written communication: it takes the burden of grammatical accuracy off the writers (“non c’hai nessun problema grammaticale”), so that they are free to express themselves without the fear of making mistakes (“perché non c’hai paura de sbaglia’/o manchi un’acca”, lines 26 and 27).

In the lines that follow the conversation above, participants expand on two topics in particular: on the one hand, I repeat the idea I expressed in line 22 above that the Roman dialect is phonetically more similar to Italian and is therefore easier to write using a keyboard; on the

¹⁴⁵ Given that, in the lines that follow, Vito himself supports the use of Roman dialect in written communication, we can infer that this is the aspect of Fernando’s narrative that most surprises him.

¹⁴⁶ As I mention in line 22, this could be due to the fact that most dialects of Central Italy, such as the one spoken in Rome, display low structural and phonetic distance from the national variety.

other, Vito's argument about dialect being a more spontaneous, care-free variety is picked up and expanded on by Roberto:

(4) La resa del dialetto

'The effect of dialect'

(D4: Roberto, Fernando, Cesare, Antonio, Fabio & Researcher)

32 R: no io [con i miei amici di roma spesso
33 Re: [secondo me il lombardo ha suoni più strani
34 quindi sarebbe un problema scriverlo
35 (Fe): è vero
36 (C): sì:
37 F: **DE HURA O DE HOTA**
38 (C): è quasi un francese
39 F: come fai a scriverlo cioè sulla tastiera
40 (C): [(makes sounds imitating the lombard dialect))
41 R: [poi: è anche più (diverte-)
42 e poi alcune cose:
43 (A): eh? ((to Fr))
44 (C): [(xx) lombardo
45 R: [cioè quando parli il tuo dialetto o comunque la:
46 Re: cià passiamo:((walking towards the kitchen))
47 (x) (xx)
48 C: [un lombardo molto stretto (xx)
49 R: [la resa che ottieni è: migliore.
50 F: migliore
51 A: [(x x) un misto tra il francese e il tedesco
52 R: [cioè quando quando parlo con: mio fratello
53 parliamo con l'accento romano o scrivo in romanaccio
54 e: ((inhales and clicks his tongue)) cioè:
55 dico veramente quello che voglio dire
56 in quella maniera hai capito
57 se già solo lo dici in italiano
58 non dà quell'effetto non è quella non e:
59 F: il taglio

32 R: *no i [with my friends from rome i often*
33 Re: *[i think the lombard dialect has stranger sounds*
34 *so it would be a problem to write in it*
35 (Fe): *it's true*
36 (C): *yeah:*
37 F: **DE HURA OR DE HOTA**
38 (C): *it's almost french*
39 F: *how can you write it i mean with a keyboard*
40 (C): *[(makes sounds imitating the lombard dialect))*
41 R: *[then: it is also more (funn-)*
42 *and then some things:*
43 (A): *eh? ((to Fr))*
44 (C): *[(xx) lombard*
45 R: *[i mean when you speak your dialect or anyway the:*
46 Re: *allright let's have the:((walking towards the kitchen))*
47 (x) (xx)
48 C: *[a very thick lombard (xx)*

49 R: [the effect you get is: better.
 50 F: better
 51 A: [(x x)a mixture between french and german
 52 R: [i mean when when i speak with: my brother
 53 we speak with a roman accent or i write in roman dialect
 54 and: ((inhales and clicks his tounge)) i mean:
 55 i really say what i want to say
 56 in that way you know
 57 if you just say it in italian
 58 it doesn't have the same effect it's not that it's not:
 59 F: the cut

In line 33, overlapping with Roberto's speech, I argue that the dialect of Lombardy would be harder to write with a computer because its sounds are more "strani", 'strange', that is, they differ more from the phonetics of standard Italian than the ones of the Roman dialect. Other participants seem to agree with my point of view (see replies in lines 35-36), and in line 37 Fabio provides an example from the *Bergamasco* dialect¹⁴⁷, confirming in line 39 that writing in this dialect with a keyboard would be very hard "come fai a scriverlo cioè sulla tastiera".

From this point on, the interaction splits into two parallel conversations, with Antonio and Cesare continuing on the topic of the Lombard dialect and other participants listening to Roberto talking about the Roman one¹⁴⁸. Roberto makes some very meaningful observations about his use of dialect and the emotional value that this linguistic code has for him: through the 'confession' of his love for the Roman dialect, he takes up a strong positioning as 'Roman' which, as I discuss below, also serves to reinforce his conversational alliance with Vito.

In line 41 he is most likely referring to the fact that dialect is funnier ("poi è anche più divertente") and in his following turns (lines 42, 45 and 49), he argues that dialect often achieves a better effect ("la resa che ottieni è migliore", line 49). For Roberto, however, dialect is not only a more effective and 'colourful' variety, it is also more authentic and expressive, a real 'language of the heart': it is only by using dialect, either in its oral or its written form (line 53) that he can 'really say what he wants to say' ("dico veramente quello che voglio dire", line 55), whereas the same sentence in Italian would not have the same effect ("se già solo lo dici in italiano/non dà quell'effetto non è quella non e:", lines 57-58). It is interesting to note that while earlier he mentioned using dialect with his friends from Rome (line 32 above), now that the discussion has

¹⁴⁷ The expressions *de hura* and *de hota* cited by Fabio refer respectively to the 'upper' part and to the 'lower' part of Bergamo, a city near Milan. In the *Bergamasco* dialect *stricto sensu*, these two areas are referred to as *Berghem de sura*, *Bergamo di sopra*, in standard Italian, 'upper Bergamo', and *Berghem de sóta*, *Bergamo di sotto*, 'lower Bergamo', whereas the aspiration is typical of the dialects of the valleys around Bergamo and the neighbouring province of Brescia.

¹⁴⁸ As the transcript suggests the interaction becomes here very confused both because of the two parallel conversations and for the fact that for most of the time speakers turn their faces from the video recorder or their faces are covered by the body of other participants. As commented in chapter III, the transcription of dinner number 4 was very challenging, as the presence of eight participants often led to parallel, and sometimes three-fold conversations.

deepened and turned into this sort of passionate confession of his love for dialect, he refers to the communication with his brother, a family member, rather than an acquaintance. This seems to confirm the concept expressed above by Fabio and Giada (see p. XX), that the use of dialect, especially by migrants, may represent a need to connect with someone's roots and to strengthen the most intimate, emotional ties.

After this somewhat reflective and romantic passage, the conversation acquires an altogether different tone when Vito steps in to point out another, less positive aspect of the Roman dialect: according to him, its words and sounds do not 'suit' women.

(5) Il dialetto romano nelle ragazze

'The Roman dialect in girls'

(D4: Vito, Roberto, Antonio, Fabio & Researcher)

60 Vi: però: [a volte
61 R: [poi essendo divertente (x)
62 Vi: per esempio per le ragazze è un po' b-
63 è un po' pesante a volte
64 R: sì no la ragazza dai che scrive in romanaccio è:
65 Vi: io c'ho c'ho un'amica mia che lei è tanto carina
66 ma se apre bocca è finita
67 V: @
68 ((general laughter))
69 A: posso dire (x)
70 Vi: che se io parlo con lei
71 A: hai detto
72 ((mimicking Vito's voice and accent)) ah: ma:
73 a me me piace tanto però
74 cioè me sembra de parlare col meccanico sotto casa
75 ((general laughter))
76 Vi: te giuro
77 io sta cosa: è incredibile
78 R: no il romano è proprio grezzo
79 Vi: è pesante ma (tanto)
80 poi per una ragazza
81 è veramente pesante
82 R: è vero è vero
83 Vi: se parli proprio romano è proprio brutto brutto brutto
84 c'ho mia cugina pure parla romanaccio:
85 ma te fa ammazzà dalle risate
86 però è proprio: è terribile
87 R: hhh
88 A: terribile ((echoing Vito))
89 Vi: cioè perdi perdi proprio punti [anche se sei
90 F: [perdi femminilità
91 (x): sì [un po' sì
92 R: [sì sì
93 A: è un po' come
94 R: cioè è così per noi [(x) per voi
95 A: [I talk like that I talk like that

96 ((putting on a broad Australian accent))
97 (1.3)

98 Re: cos' è?

60 Vi: *but: [some times*
61 R: *[then being funny (x)*
62 Vi: *for examples for girls it's a bit u-*
63 *it's a bit heavy sometime*
64 R: *yeah no a girl c'mon who writes in roman dialect is:*
65 Vi: *i've got i've got one of my friends who she is very nice*
66 *but if she opens her mouth it's the end*
67 V: *@*
68 *@*
69 A: *can i say (x)*
70 Vi: *that if i talk to her*
71 A: *you said*
72 *((mimicking Vito's voice and accent)) oh: but:*
73 *i really like her but*
74 *i mean it's like talking to the mechanic around the corner*
75 *((general laughter))*
76 Vi: *i swear*
77 *i this thing: it's incredible*
78 R: *no roman is really rough*
79 Vi: *it's heavy but (very)*
80 *let alone for a girl*
81 *it's really heavy*
82 R: *true true*
83 Vi: *if you speak proper roman it's really ugly ugly ugly*
84 *i've got my cousin also she speaks romanaccio:*
85 *she makes you kill yourself laughing*
6 *but it's really: it's terrible*
87 R: *hhh*
88 A: *terrible ((mimicking Vito's accent))*
89 Vi: *i mean you loose you really loose point [even if you're*
90 F: *[you loose femininity*
91 (x): *yes [a bit yes*
92 R: *[yeah yeah*
93 A: *it's a bit like*
94 R: *i mean it's like this for us [(x) for you*
95 A: *[I talk like that I talk like that*
96 *((putting on a broad Australian accent))*
97 (1.3)
98 Re: *what is it?*

The opposition with the positive aspects of the Roman dialect expressed thus far by Roberto is clear in line 60, in which Vito begins his turn with the word *però*; the point made by Vito and endorsed by Roberto is that the Roman dialect can be very 'heavy' ("è un po' pesante a volte", line 63), therefore sometimes it does not sound nice, especially when spoken by girls ("per esempio nelle ragazze", line 62). The expressions used by Vito and Roberto to refer to the *romanaccio* dialect represent a climax in terms of negative connotation: whereas Vito starts in line 63 with the rather neutral expression "un po' pesante", Roberto defines it with stronger

tones in line 78, “è proprio grezzo”; in Vito’s following turn he echoes his own words in line 63 adding some emphasis, “è pesante ma tanto” (line 79) and again “è veramente pesante” (line 81). In line 83 the description of girls speaking *romano* is given in even stronger terms “è proprio brutto brutto brutto”, before reaching the climax in line 86 “è proprio terribile”.

On this occasion, the interactional partnership between the two Romans at the table, Vito and Roberto, is displayed most strongly, especially thanks to Roberto’s unflinching support to Vito’s words (see lines 64, 78, 82 and 92). Roberto and Vito consistently position themselves as ‘experts’ of the Roman dialect, foregrounding their privileged, insider knowledge on the topic. Moreover, in line 94, which represents the closing of the episode, Roberto establishes a strong opposition between the “noi”, ‘us’ and the “voi”, ‘you’. Despite the difficulty in transcribing his words due to the overlap with Antonio, it seems reasonable to infer that the meaning of the turn is that if the Roman dialect sounds *rozzo* to *their* ears, then it will be even more so for people who are not from Rome. The contraposition established by Roberto between the *noi* and the *voi*, I would argue, acts on two levels: from the perspective of transportable identities (Zimmerman 1998; see section 3;4.4 in Chapter III), the *noi* refers to Roman people, opposed to the *voi* which represents people from other Italian regions; in the context of this interaction, however, and looking therefore at situated identities, Roberto puts the ultimate seal on the conversational alliance between him and Vito by referring to the two of them with the ‘we code’ of the Romans, and opposing to this ‘party’ all other participants, who do not share the same regional origin¹⁴⁹.

Antonio’s reported speech in line 95 represents a very interesting connection, although it requires some explanation to be fully appreciated. In lines 89-92, Vito, Fabio and Roberto come to the conclusion that women speaking Roman dialect often lose their femininity. It is this specific aspect, that is, girls speaking with a broad, rough accent, which sparks Antonio’s connection in line 95. His turn begins in line 93, “è un po’ come”, with which he introduces the reported speech in line 95; after I ask him to clarify what he means (“cos’è”, line 98), he explains that the words he reported are a line from an episode of the New Zealand TV series *The Flight of the Conchords*, in which actors make fun of Australians and, in this specific case, of Australian girls and their accent. Providing a skilful exhibition of linguistic knowledge of Italy and Australia, Antonio is therefore comparing girls speaking the Roman dialect to girls speaking with a broad Australian accent, thus transferring on the latter the not-so-flattering attributes assigned to the former by Vito and Roberto in the preceding conversation.

To add even more interest, after Antonio concludes his explanation about the New Zealand comedy duo and their parody of Australian girls, Vito expands on this topic and

¹⁴⁹ Interestingly enough, after providing such a strong performance of his Roman identity, in extract 6 below, in a different interactional context, Roberto will deny his being ‘from Rome’.

commences his narrative about the Australian accountant presented in chapter IV (extract 3). As discussed in Chapter IV, at the end of Vito's narrative other participants sarcastically redirect the categorisation of *rozzo*, 'uncouth' at Vito on the ground of his use of some 'colourful' expressions. Looking at the whole conversation, therefore, we can see a fascinating pattern in which the accusation of *rozzezza*, 'uncouthness' swings from Romans to Australians (extract 5 above and Vito's narrative in extract 3 in Chapter IV), and then back again to Romans (end of extract 3 in Chapter IV). The swinging and shifting of participants' use of this categorisation showcases once again the fluid nature of categories deployed in conversation and the constant negotiation and reassessment to which they are subject during interaction.

6.2 Negotiating regional and sub-regional identities

As mentioned above, discussions and jokes about participants' region or town of origin are very frequent in the recordings. Participants' attitudes towards their home towns vary widely, from the affectionate sense of pride expressed, for example, by Amanda towards the small town of Miglione¹⁵⁰, to the stern criticism expressed by many others towards their town or city. Two patterns of identity negotiation, however, seem to be carried out more often: the most common one is the rejection of a projected regional or sub-regional identity, the other is the negotiation of identity in individual with mixed regional origins.

6.2.1 Rejecting identities

As mentioned above, a common pattern which emerged from the recorded interactions is the ascription of a regional/sub-regional identity by one participant to another which, in turn, rejects the identity projected onto him/her. Most of the times, interactants rejected the connection made by others between them and the *capoluogo*, the 'big city', proudly claiming their origin from smaller towns in the region. This is the case, for example, of extract number 6 below.

(6) Roma, Latina o Terracina? ¹⁵¹ I

(D4: Valeria, Roberto, Antonio)

01 V: tu sei interista
 02 R: mm sì
 03 A: ALLA GRANDE ((high five with R))
 04 V: e perché se sei di Roma
 05 R: ((raises his shoulders))
 06 [no non sono di roma=
 07 V: [sei diventato interista
 08 R: =non sono di roma

¹⁵⁰ The name of Amanda's hometown has been changed to maintain participants' anonymity.

¹⁵¹ Roma is the capital of the Lazio Region, in central Italy, Latina is *capoluogo di provincia* 'capital of province' in the same region and Terracina is a smaller town in the province of Latina.

09 V: va beh scusa scusa (x)roma hhh (.)
 10 se sei di latina hhh
 11 R: no non sono [neanche di latina
 12 V: [no se sei di-
 13 cos'è quel paesino
 14 R: va beh son nato: a terracina
 15 ho girato:
 16 ho cambiato casa varie volte
 17 V: ah ho capito

01 V: *you go for inter*
 02 R: *mm yes*
 03 A: *NICE ONE ((high five with R))*
 04 V: *and why if you're from rome*
 05 R: *((raises his shoulders))*
 06 *[no i'm not from rome=*
 07 V: *[you became an inter supporter*
 08 R: *=i'm not from rome*
 09 V: *allright sorry sorry (x)rome hhh (.)*
 10 *if you're from latina hhh*
 11 R: *no i'm not [from latina either*
 12 V: *[no if you're from-*
 13 *what's that little town*
 14 R: *well i was born: in terracina*
 15 *i travelled:*
 16 *i moved house many times*
 17 Va: *oh i see*

In line 01, Valeria asks Roberto if he supports Inter, a soccer team from Milan, and after he replies affirmatively (line 02), she expresses her surprise, given that Roberto is from Rome (“e perché se sei di Roma”, line 04). Roberto first raises his shoulders as if to say that he supports Inter for no specific reasons to do with geographical loyalty, but then his focus shifts on to the identity Valeria projected on him in line 04 and he reacts with a very clear “no non sono di Roma” (line 06), reiterated in line (08). In line 09, “va beh scusa scusa”, Valeria, although apologising for her mistake, seems at the same time to find Roberto’s reaction excessive (“va beh”) and funny (see giggles at the end of lines 09 and 10). In line 10 she tries to make up for her mistake (“se sei di latina”) but this association does not seem to satisfy Roberto either, as he replies with an equally firm “no non sono neanche di latina” (line 11). Valeria then has to make a further correction, “no se sei di-” (line 12), but she fails to remember the name of Roberto’s hometown (“cos’è quel paesino”, line 13). In lines 14-16 Roberto explains that he was born in Terracina, a town in the Lazio region, but then moved house several times (“ho cambiato casa varie volte” line 16). In line 17, Valeria’s reply, “ah ho capito”, suggests that the misunderstanding is successfully resolved.

Valeria knew that Roberto was born in Terracina because a few minutes before extract number 6 they had another conversation regarding Roberto’s origins; the lines below not only

represent the logical antecedent of extract 6, they also provide further elements towards the shaping of Roberto's identity.

(7) Roma, Latina or Terracina? II

(D4: Valeria, Roberto)

01 R: quando mi chiedono di dove sei dipende
02 se sono se sono australiani dico di roma
03 se sono italiani dico di latina
04 se sono di latina dico di terracina
05 V: ((giggles)) (x)

01 R: *when they ask me where are you from it depends*
02 *if they're australian i say rome*
03 *if they're italian i say latina*
04 *if they're from latina i say terracina*
05 V: *((giggles)) (x)*

In these lines, Roberto tells Valeria that when someone enquires about his origins, his reply changes according to the interlocutors (line 01): to Australians, he replies he is from Rome (line 02), to Italians, from Latina (03) and to Romans, from Terracina (04). Valeria, therefore, knew that Roberto was not born in Rome, although we can easily infer why in extract 6 she links him to the 'big city': given the context, her specific aim was to oppose Roberto's origin to his soccer preferences, and, since Inter is from Milan, the regional capital of the Lombardy region, she logically opposed it to Rome, Milan's equivalent in the Lazio region. For this reason, Roberto's reaction in extract 6 is even more meaningful, given that his origins were not the focus of the conversation and that he had already had the chance to clarify them to Valeria before (extract 7). He is deliberately shifting the focus of Valeria's turn towards her ascription of his identity to the city of Rome and clearly taking a distance from it. As cursorily noted above (see footnote 145 on p.198), this stands in stark contrast with his strong positioning as Roman in extracts 03, 04 and 05 and further demonstrates the locally originated character of interactional identity.

Moreover, the way Roberto describes his origins in lines 14-16 of extract 6, together with his words in extract 7, suggest that his aim is not that of showing *campanilismo* towards his hometown of Terracina, but, on the contrary, that of presenting himself as not particularly attached to it: he puts a lot of emphasis on the fact that he travelled a lot and lived in many places (lines 15 and 16 of extract 6), and extract 7 also confirms that he is not particularly keen to provide people with accurate information about his hometown.

The following extract contains a similar conversational pattern.

(8) Milano o periferia?

'Milan or outskirts?'

(D4: Antonio, Valeria, Vito, Fabio & Researcher)

01 A: si beh ma: tu a milano hai mai giocato: oe:
02 F: no io non sono di milano
03 A: [°ah ok°
04 [(general laughter))
05 Re: della periferia
06 A: [ah:
07 V: [e allora basta
08 A: beh ma anche forse nella periferia
09 cioè ci sono: ae- io sono della periferia di milano
10 nel campetto dietro casa
11 sono l'unico italiano che giocava
12 Re: [@
13 Vi: [ma ↓davvero
14 A: tutti filippini

01 A: *yeah well but: in milan have you ever played: oe:*
02 F: *no i am not from milan*
03 A: *[°oh ok°*
04 *[(general laughter))*
05 Re: *from the outskirts*
06 A: *[eh:*
07 V: *[that's it then*
08 A: *well but maybe also in the outskirts*
09 *i mean there are: ae- i am from the outskirts of milan*
10 *in the local park*
11 *i was the only italian playing*
12 Re: *[@*
13 Vi: *[↓really*
14 A: *all filipinos*

While talking about playing basketball at the local park, in line 01 Antonio, a Milanese himself, asks Fabio if he has ever done that in Milan. Fabio's reaction, however, is altogether similar to Roberto's one in extract 6: disregarding Antonio's question, he focuses on the fact that Antonio positioned him as Milanese and strongly rejects the connection ("no io non sono di milano", line 02); after his turn, Fabio joins other participants laughing, whereas I step in to clarify that Fabio is originally from the outskirts of Milan ("della periferia", line 05). The start of Antonio's turn in lines 08-10 seems to suggest that he is accepting my positioning of Fabio as "della periferia" while maintaining for himself the one of Milanese ("beh ma anche forse nella periferia", line 08), but in line 09 he admits that he is also from the *periferia*, 'outskirts' and then goes on with his argument .

Conversational positionings seem to be carried out in a particularly subtle way in this interaction: in line 01, Antonio seeks the support of another Milanese, Fabio, for his argument that most of the people who play basketball in public parks in Milan are migrants (lines 10-14); Fabio, however, denies this support, and Antonio seems to react to Fabio's reply with some

surprise (“ah ok”, line 03). Having invited Fabio to align with his Milanese identity and having received a negative response, in line 09, Antonio shares the positioning I projected on Fabio in line 05, thus finally establishing, although on a different level, the alignment between him and Fabio he had been seeking since the beginning of the extract.

Laughter after Fabio’s turn seems to serve the purpose of exorcising Fabio’s strong and unexpected reaction (see Valeria’s comment in line 07 “e allora basta”) and of softening the contrast it creates, both in topic and in tone, with Antonio’s question in line 01. This is probably why I step in in line 05, trying to make up for Fabio’s somewhat rude reply. From a conversation analytic point of view, Fabio’s turn in line 02 and Roberto’s one in line 06 of extract 6, are *dispreferred responses*, as they contradict the other speaker’s expectations; as I commented in section 1.1.3.1, in Italian, dispreferred responses are often produced in a straightforward fashion, without the linguistic ‘fillers’ that characterise them in English. Despite this, however, Fabio’s and Roberto’s responses elicit a surprised and somewhat resentful reaction in their interlocutors (line 09 of extract 6 and line 03 above) and in other interactants (lines 04, 05 and 07 above) and they require further interactional work in order to re-establish social solidarity among interactants (see the repairs in lines 08-09 above and in lines 09-10 and 12-13 in extract 6)

Extract number 9 below differs from most of the extracts presented so far as the rejection of a sub-regional identity is not negotiated *in* the interaction, but it is ‘acted out’ by Amanda in a narrative about her hometown of Miglione.

(9a) Napoletani, Beneventani e Miglionesi I

(D1: Amanda & Davide, Martina, Fabio & Researcher)

01 Am: noi siamo verso l'appennino verso il molise
 02 Re: ah
 03 Am: poi benevento sta proprio più verso
 04 andando verso-
 05 D: infatti noi ci definiamo non [(.) non campani
 06 Am: [napoli no
 07 noi stiamo invece-
 08 stiamo ancora più verso il molise di benevento
 09 tanto è vero che loro
 10 parlano molto più il napoletanesco di noi.
 11 (1.2)
 12 Am: cioè a me quando mi dicono che tu sei napoletana
 13 io (hhh) ((inhales as if scared)) (1.3)
 14 mi viene una cosa↓
 15 NO (.) io sono sulle monta- sulle colli:ne
 16 napoli sta sul ma:re e c'hanno:
 17 M: è vero (.) [no ma è diverso eh?
 18 Am: [un'altra mentalità
 19 loro vengono i napoletani vengono a farsi le vacanze
 20 i fine settimana al nostro paesino,
 21 perché è arieggiato [sta in collina
 22 Re: [e

23 Am: no è vero ((high pitch))
 24 e quando tu li senti al supermercato
 25 uehi ueh ueh ueh
 26 Re: si sente
 27 (.)
 28 D: sono arrivati i napoletani
 29 Re: @@
 30 F: anche lì
 31 (x) x
 32 D: ma quand'è che se ne vanno? ((funny voice))
 33 M: @

01 Am: *we are towards the appennine towards molise*
 02 Re: *oh*
 03 Am: *benevento then is actually more towards*
 04 *going towards-*
 05 D: *in fact we consider ourselves as [(.) non campani]¹⁵²*
 06 Am: *[napoli you know*
 07 *we are instead-*
 08 *we're even more towards molise than benevento*
 09 *so much so that they*
 10 *speak a lot more the neapolitan dialect than us.*
 11 (1.2)
 12 Am: *i mean to me when they tell me that you are neapolitan*
 13 *i (hhh) ((inhales as if scared)) (1.3)*
 14 *i get this thing↓*
 15 *NO (.) i'm in the mountai- in the hi:lls*
 16 *naples is by the sea: and they've got:*
 17 M: *it's true (.) [no but it's different eh?*
 18 Am: *[a different mentality*
 19 *they come the neapolitans come for the holidays*
 20 *for the weekends to our little town,*
 21 *because there's breeze [it's in the hills*
 22 Re: *[@*
 23 Am: *no it's true ((high pitch))*
 24 *and when you hear them at the supermarket*
 25 *uehi ueh ueh ueh*
 26 Re: *you can tell*
 27 (.)
 28 D: *the neapolitans are here*
 29 Re: @@
 30 F: *even there*
 31 (x) x
 32 D: *but when do they leave ((funny voice))*
 33 M: @

In line 01 Amanda, answering my curiosity about the location of the small town of Miglione¹⁵³, explains that it is located towards the neighbouring region of Molise, close to the Appennines,

¹⁵² *Campani* is the word used to refer to people from the Campania region, where Naples, Benevento and Miglione are located.

¹⁵³ In order to facilitate the understanding of the extract above, it is important to clarify that Amanda and Davide are originally from the small town of Miglione, in the province of Benevento, in the Campania

and for this reason, as Davide explains entering the conversation in line 05, they ‘define’ themselves as “non campani” (line 05), denying their belonging to the Campania region. In her turn commenced in lines 03 and 04 and concluded in lines 06-10, Amanda opposes Miglione and its people to Benevento and the *beneventani*, concluding that not only is the latter located closer to Naples, but also that the dialect of Benevento is a lot more similar than theirs to the one of Naples (“tanto è vero che loro parlano molto più il napoletanesco¹⁵⁴ di noi”, lines 09-10). Having explained this geographical and linguistic differentiation to other participants, she can now legitimately take up for herself a strong positioning as non-Neapolitan, as she does in lines 12-18, reporter here for convenience:

12 Am: cioè a me quando mi dicono che tu sei napoletana
 13 io (hhhh) ((inhales as if scared)) (1.3)
 14 mi viene una cosa↓
 15 NO (.) io sono sulle monta- sulle colli:ne
 16 napoli sta sul ma:re e c’hanno:
 17 M: è vero (.) [no ma è diverso eh?
 18 Am: [un'altra mentalità

Amanda tells the others that the gap she feels between herself and the Neapolitan people is so deep she almost has a physical reaction when somebody refers to her as *napoletana* (“io hhhh”, “mi viene una cosa”, lines 13 and 14). She then goes on explaining that not only is Naples located by the sea whereas she is from the hills, but Neapolitans also have a different mentality and, as she comments in the lines that follow, people from Naples also *sound* different and can easily be spotted when they visit her town for the holidays (“e quando tu li senti al supermercato”, “uehi ueh ueh ueh”, lines 24-25).

As mentioned above, this example differs from the others presented in this section as the rejection of identity is ‘acted out’ by Amanda, who, in lines 12-13 reports a conversation with an imaginary interlocutor, implied in her use of the third person plural in line 12, “quando mi dicono che tu sei napoletana”. Although she uses the connective *che*, which usually introduces indirect speech, the words spoken by this imaginary interlocutor are reported as direct speech, as we can infer from the use of the pronoun *tu*, (“tu sei napoletana”), instead of the first person one to refer to Amanda herself, thus creating the effect of an actual conversation. In line 15, she reinforces her rejection of the Neapolitan identity projected on her with a loud “NO” and, after reporting her instinctive, almost physical reaction in lines 13 and 14 she then explains more rationally why she considers herself different from the *napoletani* (lines

region; the two big cities mentioned in the extract, Benevento and Naples, are respectively the *capoluogo di provincia*, ‘capital of the province’ and the *capoluogo di regione*, ‘capital of the region’.

¹⁵⁴ The word *napoletanesco* (from the adjective *napoletano* ‘Neapolitan’, plus the suffix *-esco*, which confers a slight derogatory nuance) does not exist in standard Italian or, to my knowledge, in any Italian dialect. It echoes the word *romanesco*, colloquially used to refer to the Roman dialect, and it is likely to be a neologism created by Amanda to enhance the expressivity of her speech and to support her negative view of Naples and its people.

15, 16 and 18). In the remainder of the extract, Amanda and Davide cooperate to reinforce their conraposition towards Neapolitans.

The discussion about the opposition between *napoletani* and *miglionesi* goes on in the lines after extract 9, where the tones become even more pungent:

(9b) **Napoletani, Beneventani e Miglionesi II**

(D1: Amanda & Davide, Martina, Fabio & Researcher)

34 Am: da noi tu pensi ma chi è quest-
35 ma è **'no**¹⁵⁵ napoletà:
36 proprio così cioè
37 M: °noi ce l'abbiamo con i milanesi°
38 F: ah: è anche un insulto
39 M: (x)
40 Am: sì (x)
41 M: per me quando mi dici napoletano,
42 F: però non mi aspettavo che anche lì
43 che alla fine napoli è è dietro l'angolo praticamente
44 M: (x) diverso
45 Am: son due ore di macchina [due ore e mezza
46 M: [eh: ma io ti capi- la capisco
47 perché è [diverso
48 Am: [no: ma è diverso
49 non ti trovi niente non ti trovi come:
50 M: è è come cambia[(x)
51 D: [ma loro comunque ricambiano eh
52 Am: loro ricam- se tu a me loro sentono il mio accento↓
53 e tu che non (.) sei familiare (x)
54 e tu dici (.) sei napoletana e un napoletano ti sente,
55 lui ti dirà (.) NO lei non è napoletana:
56 loro se ne accorgono pari pari
57 F: vogliono distinguersi anche loro
58 D: e ti schifano.
59 Re: @@
60 Am: ti schifano
61 @@
62 D: perché tu non vieni da napoli, vieni dalle colline.
63 Am: dal: paesello e invece loro [so cittadini
64 D: [dal paesello
65 Am: e tu dici non ti **preoccupà**,
66 tu stattenne a napoli con la **munnezza**
67 F: [@@@
68 Am: [io sto-
69 @@@
70 M: è ve:ro bra: va.
71 @@@

34 Am: *where we live you think but who's thi-*
35 *but it's a neapolitan:*
36 *like that i mean*
37 M: *°we're cross with the milanese°*

¹⁵⁵ Words in bold type belong to an Italian dialect, in this case the dialect of Miglione or, more generally, of the Campania region.

38 F: oh: it's also an insult
 39 M: (x)
 40 Am: yes (x)
 41 M: to me when you say neapolitan,
 42 F: but i didn't expect this even there
 43 which in the end naples is is around the corner basically
 44 M: (x) different
 45 Am: it's a two-hour drive [two and a half
 46 M: [eh: but i understand y- i understand her
 47 because it's [different
 48 Am: [no: but it's different
 49 you don't get along at all you don't get along like:
 50 M: it's it's like changing[(x)
 51 D: [but anyway they feel the same eh
 52 Am: they feel- if you to me they hear my accent ↓
 53 and you that are not (.)familiar (x)
 54 and you say (.) you're neapolitan and a neapolitan hears you,
 55 he would tell you (.) NO she's not neapolita: n.
 56 they pick it up just as well
 57 F: they also want to distinguish themselves
 58 D: and they snob you.
 59 Re: @@
 60 Am: they snob you
 61 @@
 62 D: because you're not from naples, you're from the hills.
 63 Am: from the: little village and instead they [are from the city
 64 D: [from the village
 65 Am: and you say don't worry,
 66 you stay in naples with the rubbish
 67 F: [@@@
 68 Am: [i stay-
 69 @@@
 70 M: that's tru:e well sa:id
 71 @@@

The lines above represent an emblematic example of *campanilismo* (see section 2.3.2), which often is not limited to a proud defence of someone's hometown but drifts into a more or less derogatory description of other towns, especially the neighbouring ones. Amanda's words about Neapolitans are rather stern: in lines 34-35, using the 'we-code' of the *Miglionesi* people, "da noi tu pensi ma chi è quest-/ma è no napoleta", she explains how saying that someone is a *Napoletano* is considered rather insulting, as Fabio picks up in line 38 "ah è anche un insulto". Fabio was not expecting such a strong rivalry between neighbouring cities (lines 42-43), in fact, whereas he knows that Neapolitans are often looked upon by people from the north, he finds very surprising that even the *Beneventani*, or, rather, the *Miglionesi*, have such a negative attitude towards them.

As Davide and Amanda admit, however, (lines 51-64) Neapolitans have exactly the same feelings towards the *miglionesi*: not only do they also recognise and proudly highlight the linguistic difference (lines 52-55), but their opinion about the *miglionesi* is not very flattering

either (“e ti schifano”, lines 58, 60), based on the fact that the latter are from the “paesello” (line 63), the little country town, whereas Neapolitans are from the big city (lines 62-64). In the conclusion of this episode (lines 65-71), reiterating her proud sense of belonging to her hometown of Miglione, Amanda refers to Naples’ notorious issues with regards to the collection and disposal of rubbish, which have been affecting the city for decades (“tu stattenne a napoli con la monnezza”, line 66).

In line 70, “è vero brava”, Martina once again shows her support for what Amanda said, as she has been doing for the whole episode (see in particular lines 17 and 46). Martina’s turn in line 37, “noi ce l’abbiamo coi milanesi”, is especially meaningful: firstly, she pronounces these words in a lower volume because, given the presence of two Milanese people at the table (Fabio and me), she does not want to sound offensive or challenge our identities putting too much emphasis on the sentence. Moreover, she uses, as Amanda did in line 34, the first person plural *noi*, which is meant to refer to the ‘we-group’ of the people from the Liguria region, rather than that of a specific city or town; in fact, she opposes her ‘we-group’ to that of people from another region, the “milanesi” one, rather than to that of another city within the same region as in the case of the Naples/Benevento/Miglione rivalry. Finally, by endorsing Amanda’s narrative with the support of her own experience, she gives a further confirmation of the fact that Italian *campanilismo* is still alive and well both in Italy and in Italian migrants ‘across the ocean’.

6.2.2 Negotiating mixed regional identities

In the section above I focused on instances of talk in which participants rejected the identities projected on them by others; in the next two extracts I discuss, instead, how interactants discursively negotiated the identity of participants with mixed regional identities, that is, those whose parents are from different Italian regions (extract 10) or those who spent many years outside their region of origin (extract 11). In extract 10, the negotiation is resolved quite quickly among three interactants, while extract 11 involves more participants and, as I discuss below, follows quite an elaborate pattern to its resolution.

(10) “Terrone anche tu”

‘You’re also a *terrone*’

(D3: Amanda & Davide, Fabio & Researcher)

01 F: co[munque quello su succedeva anche
 02 Re: [ma tu vale
 03 F: scusa (.) anche in italia
 04 perché io mi ricordo (.) i miei nonni e:
 05 si sono spostati da napoli a: milano comunque
 06 Am: ((covers mouth with hand)) °terrone anche tu°
 07 F: [esatto=
 08 D: [e

09 F: =mezzo mezzo mezzo
 10 Am: ah è vero c'hai la [(parte)
 11 Re: [l'altro è bergamasco e bresciano
 12 [l'altro
 13 F: [dalle valli bergamasche
 14 Re: un quarto bergamasco un quarto bresciano
 15 e metà napoletano
 16 Am: =menomale che c'hai la metà:
 17 ((puts her hand on Fabio's shoulder)) napoletana
 18 F: @
 19 Am: ti sei salvato

01 F: any[way that happened also
 02 Re: [but you vale
 03 F: sorry (.) also in italy
 04 because i remember (.) my grandparents and:
 05 they moved from naples to: milan anyway
 06 Am: ((covers mouth with hand)) °you're also a terrone°
 07 F: [exactly=
 08 D: [@
 09 F: =half half half
 10 Am: oh that's right you have the [(side)
 11 Re: [the other is from bergamo and
 12 brescia[the other
 13 F: [from the valleys of bergamo
 14 Re: a quarter from bergamo a quarter from brescia
 15 and half from naples=
 16 Am: =it's lucky you have the half: ((puts her hand on Fabio's
 17 shoulder)) from naples
 18 F: @
 19 Am: you got away with it

In a discussion about language crystallisation among migrants (see extracts 5 and 6 in Chapter V), Fabio mentions the example of his grandparents who, after moving from Naples to Milan (lines 04-05), maintained in their dialectal repertoire many words which were no longer used in Naples. Amanda's attention, however, is caught by the fact that Fabio's grandparents were from Naples and, in line 06 ("terrone anche tu"), she jokingly includes Fabio in the same category to which she belongs, labelling him as a *terrone*¹⁵⁶, 'southern Italian'. However, as if she did not want to steer the conversation away from the main topic, and also being aware of the risk she was taking using the word *terrone*, she utters the sentence with a lower volume and partly covers her mouth with her hand¹⁵⁷ leaning with her body towards Fabio, sitting right next to her. Her use of the word *terrone* despite being from southern Italy herself, however, transforms her

¹⁵⁶ The word *terrone* is colloquially used in northern Italy to refer to people from the south; however, it has, according to context, a more or less derogatory nuance, and is often considered offensive and therefore avoided in formal conversations.

¹⁵⁷ Here is how Goffman described the value of this gesture (1981: 153): "The shielding of the mouth with the hand, already a ritualized way of marking a byplay during large meetings, is brought into small conversational circles to mark a communication as having the character of an aside, but here with no one to be excluded from it".

potentially face-threatening turn into a humorous and self-deprecatory joke (see Davide's reaction in line 08), thus making this expression acceptable even in the semi-formal¹⁵⁸ context of the interaction.

Fabio's reaction in lines 07 and 09 is slightly contradictory: whereas at first he seems to accept the identity of *terrone* projected on him by Amanda, "esatto" (line 07), he then goes on to produce a repair "mezzo mezzo mezzo" (line 09), emphasizing the fact that he is only 'half' from the south, as his mother's family is from the north. Amanda accepts Fabio's new positioning, "ah è vero" (line 10), before I step in to clarify Fabio's origins (lines 11, 12 and 14). Amanda then concludes the episode with another ironic turn ("menomale che c'hai la metà/napoletana", lines 16 and 17, and "ti sei salvato", line 19). Interestingly enough, compared to her strongly derogatory comments about Neapolitans in extract 9, Fabio's Neapolitan 'half' is now considered by Amanda a very positive attribute, as opposed to his northern one; this is a further demonstration of how categories 'fluctuate' in conversation, changing meaning, attributes and connotation according to the context of the interaction.

(11) Toscano o Milanese?

'Tuscan or Milanese?'

(D3: Ivo, Valeria, Amanda, Fabio & Researcher)

01 Re: ma io mi ricordavo che avessi l'accento toscano più:
 02 ↑forte [°qualche anno fa°
 03 I: [(x)
 04 posso parlare tutt'e due
 05 V: secondo me comunque hai una cadenza più toscana
 06 che che milanese
 07 I: ((slightly moving his head))eh:: modestamente a parte
 08 Re: @
 09 F: @
 10 (0.9)
 11 F: rinnega le origini milanesi
 12 Am: ((purse hand))
 13 ma perché scusa [tu non sei:=
 14 I: [milanesi: (non) si nasce si diventa
 15 Am: =hai detto che f- sei toscano
 16 V: ma tanto cioè a nessuno a milano è milanese no
 17 I: milanesi non si nasce si diventa ((nodding)) dicevo
 18 V: eh quindi i tuoi genitori=
 19 F: =no no ci sono [i milanesi
 20 V: [ci sono esistono ancora
 21 F: u: sì sì
 22 [pochi
 23 V: [tanti milanesi a- almeno una co-

¹⁵⁸ As commented in Chapter III, although the context of the dinners was *potentially* a formal one, given that interactants were taking part to an academic research, were often meeting for the first time and were being video recorded, conversations turned out to be very casual both for the topics discussed and for the register used.

24 un' un'origine [estranea
 25 Re: [come gli australiani
 26 Am: eh
 27 V: sì
 28 Am: da(x) milanese (xx) terrone eheh
 29 I: qualcuno ci sarà
 30 F: (x)
 31 V: quindi i tuoi genitori son tutti milanesi
 32 I: sì cioè ne ho solo due eh
 33 ((general laughter))
 34 Am: [ah:
 35 I: [ə
 36 V: [((moving her hands backwards)) dal ceppo
 37 intendo il ceppo prima dei tuoi genitori
 38 i loro genitori
 39 I: boh non lo so in realtà sì fino ai nonni sì
 40 Am: e perché tu c'hai l'accento toscano
 41 ((looking confused))
 42 I: perché ho passato gli ultimi quindici anni: [lì=
 43 Am: [ah: ok
 44 I: =però non in: ho vissuto un po' nel [countryside
 45 F: [pisa
 46 Am: e però tu in realtà non sei toscano
 47 ((shaking her head))tu sei milanese.
 48 se sei nato e cresciuto ↑là
 49 I: adesso se vogliamo proprio mettere le etichette
 50 Re: ə
 51 Am: [genitori milanesi
 52 V: [però guarda come stai accentando
 53 la cadenza (x) pisana adesso ə
 54 Am: ((nodding and smiling)) perché ti pia-
 55 preferisci la toscana
 56 ma ((shaking head))
 57 eh (1.3)((looking at I, smiling and shaking her head))
 58 [eheh
 59 I: [no:
 60 tutto il mondo è paese
 61 (1.6)
 62 Re: mm
 63 Am: ((clicks her tongue and shakes her head))
 64 (1.8)
 65 I: a livello di dialetti mi piacciono tutt'e due
 66 (0.8)
 67 Re: ma a milano ormai nessuno-
 68 va beh sì trovi i vecchi che parlano il dialetto (x)
 69 [sui tram
 70 I: [no a casa mia:
 71 si è sempre parlato dialetto
 72 Re: sì?
 73 (0.9)
 74 I: non lo parlo più però
 75 Re: mmh
 76 I: poi ti parlo anche in **milanes se te vöret**¹⁵⁹
 77 Re: ə

01 Re: *but i remembered your tuscan accent to be:*

¹⁵⁹ Words in bold type belong to an Italian dialect, in this case the dialect of Milan.

02 ↑stronger [°a few years ago°
 03 I: [(x)
 04 I can speak both of them
 05 V: *anyway I think you sound more tuscan than than milanese*
 07 I: *((slightly moving his head))eh:: modestly speaking*
 08 Re: @
 09 F: @
 10 (.)
 11 F: *denies his milanese origins*
 12 Am: *((moving her hand with her fingers grouped in the middle))*
 13 *but why [aren't you: =*
 14 I: *[you: are (not) born milanese you become one*
 15 Am: =*you said you're tuscan*
 16 Va: *but anyway i mean in nobody in milan nobody is from milan right*
 17 I: *you aren't born a milanese you become one ((nodding)) i was saying*
 18 Va: *eh so your parents=*
 19 F: =*no no there are[some milanese people*
 20 Va: *[are: there they still exist*
 21 F: *oh: yes yes*
 22 *[few*
 23 Va: *[a lot of milanese people a- at least one th-*
 24 *one one foreign [origin*
 25 Re: *[like australians*
 26 Am: *eh*
 27 Va: *yes*
 28 Am: *da(x) milanese (xx) terrone eheh*
 29 I: *there must be some of them*
 30 F: (x)
 31 Va: *so your parents are all milanese*
 32 I: *yeah i mean i've only got two ah*
 33 @
 34 Am: [*oh:*
 35 I: [@
 36 Va: [*((moving her hands backwards)) the lineage*
 37 *i mean the lineage of your parents*
 38 *their parents*
 39 I: *i don't know actually yes until my grandparents yes*
 40 Am: *why do you have a tuscan accent then*
 41 *((looking confused))*
 42 I: *because i spent the last fifteen years: [there=*
 43 Am: [*oh: ok*
 44 I: =*but not in: i was living a bit in the [countryside*
 45 F: [*pisa*
 46 Am: *but in reality you are not tuscan*
 47 *((shaking her head)) you are milanese.*
 48 *if you're born and bred ↑there*
 49 I: *well now if we really want to put labels*
 50 Re: @
 51 Am: [*milanese parents*
 52 Va: [*but look how you're stressing*
 53 *your pisano¹⁶⁰ (x) accent now@*
 54 Am: *((nodding and smiling)) because you li-*

¹⁶⁰ The adjective *pisano* refers to the city of Pisa, in Tuscany, where Ivo lived for fifteen years.

55 *you prefer tuscan*
 56 *but ((shaking head))*
 57 *eh (1.3) ((looking at I, smiling and shaking her head))*
 58 *[eheh*
 59 I: *[no:*
 60 *it's a small world*
 61 (1.6)
 62 Re: *mm*
 63 Am: *((clicks her tongue and shakes her head))*
 64 (1.8)
 65 I: *as far as dialect is concerned i like them both*
 66 (0.8)
 67 Re: *but nowadays in milan nobody-*
 68 *well yes you can find the old folks who speak dialect(x)*
 69 *[on trams*
 70 I: *[no in my house:*
 71 *we have always used dialect*
 72 Re: *yeah?*
 73 (0.9)
 74 I: *i don't speak it anymore though*
 75 Re: *mm*
 76 I: *but then again i can speak to you in milanese if you like*
 77 Re: *@*

As mentioned above, this extract represents a very fascinating example of multi-party identity negotiation. The participants' goal in the interaction above is to ascribe Ivo to one or the other of the regional and sub-regional identities made relevant by him during the evening¹⁶¹, that is, Tuscan and Milanese. Moreover, it also confirms the link between language and identity and the influence that linguistic aspects, such as style or accents, have on identity construction and ascription in interaction (Bucholtz 1999a, 1999b; 2004; Auer 2007; De Fina 2007b, 2007c).

At the beginning of the extract, I mention the fact that a few years ago, when I first met Ivo, he seemed to have a stronger Tuscan accent (line 01-02), in his reply he positions himself as equally competent in both dialects "posso parlare tutt'e due", line 04¹⁶², but Valeria enters the conversation to partially contradict what Ivo just said by pointing out that she perceives Ivo's speech, "la cadenza" (line 05), as more Tuscan than Milanese (lines 05-06).

Whereas my comment in line 01 could potentially have represented a threat to Ivo's Tuscan identity, in his reply, or at least in the part of it which could be transcribed (line 04), he does not seem to take the side of one or the other of his regional identities, rather, he takes up

¹⁶¹ As discussed below, Ivo is originally from Milan, but spent many years in Tuscany where he acquired a slight Tuscan accent. Moreover, during the dinner he often referred to Tuscan proverbs (one remembers extract 10a in Chapter IV) or dialectal words; this is why Amanda, who first met Ivo at the dinner, inferred that Ivo was from Tuscany, whereas Valeria, who also met Ivo that night, must have had the chance to talk to him about his origins before the recording started and therefore knew he is originally from Milan.

¹⁶² At this point, it is worth keeping in mind, Ivo's biography has not yet been explicitly discussed, therefore his words "tutt'e due" must sound confusing to those participants, like Amanda, who are not aware of his 'double identity'.

for the first time the positioning of 'in-betweener' which he will try to defend throughout the whole extract.

The only occasion on which he seems to suggest a preference for his Tuscan 'side' is his reply to Valeria in line 07, "modestamente a parte". His turn is grammatically incorrect, as he mixes two different possible replies, *modestia a parte* and *modestamente*, 'modestly speaking', two expressions, very similar in meaning, that can be used to acknowledge someone's praise or flattering comment without sounding too serious or conceited. The fact that Ivo uses such an expression in his reply suggests that he considers Valeria's comment as flattering, and in fact links 'sounding' Tuscan to positive attributes¹⁶³. Fabio picks up on this implication of Ivo's turn and jokingly accuses him of trying to *rinnegare*, 'deny', 'disavow' his Milanese origins ("rinnega le origini milanesi", line 11).

At this point, the negotiation of Ivo's 'double' identity becomes even more intriguing, as Amanda also steps into the conversation looking very confused (see her gesture in line 12): as far as she is concerned, Ivo is from Tuscany because he sounds Tuscan (see her comment in line 40) and because he has been positioning himself as Tuscan throughout the dinner¹⁶⁴. Her turn, however, is temporarily ignored by other participants as the topic shifts to Milan and its diverse population. It is only when, in line 31, Valeria goes back to Ivo's family origins asking if both his parents are from Milan that Amanda realises that the situation is more complicated than it looked (see her response cry in line 34). After Ivo confirms that his parents and grandparents are all from Milan (line 39), Amanda makes the contrast between his origins and his accent explicit by asking "e perché tu c'hai l'accento toscano" (line 40). Ivo explains that he spent the last fifteen years before migrating to Australia in Tuscany (line 42), specifying, with an English transfer, that he was living "nel countryside" (line 44). Amanda, who now has a clearer picture of the situation, quickly comes to the conclusion that Ivo is not Tuscan but Milanese, "e però tu in realtà non sei toscano/ tu sei milanese", lines 46 and 47: the tone of her turn is very firm, she marks a strong opposition with what has been said before with the expressions "però" and "in realtà", and reinforces her words by shaking her head vigorously. She continues (lines 48 and 51) explaining why she thinks Ivo cannot call himself *toscano*, that is, because he was born and raised in Milan by Milanese parents. Ivo's reply is once again humorous "adesso se vogliamo proprio mettere le etichette" (line 49) and in line with his positioning thus far: he defends the stand of 'in-betweener', of *cittadino del mondo*, 'citizen of the world'. Once again, however, the others try to fit him into a category: Valeria, "però guarda come stai accentando la cadenza

¹⁶³ This is not surprising, as Tuscan dialects traditionally enjoy great prestige in Italy. This could partly be due to the fact that Italian is the result of the standardisation of the Florentine literary language.

¹⁶⁴ In her turn in line 13 Amanda actually mentions the fact that Ivo *said* he was Tuscan, "hai detto che f-sei toscano": although this may have happened outside recording time, as I assumed it to be the case for Valeria, it could also be that she inferred Ivo's origin gathering all the cues he gave out during the dinner and is now referring to this process as if it happened explicitly.

pisana adesso”, lines 52-53, points out that in replying to Amanda, who was challenging his Tuscan identity, he emphasised his Tuscan accent, as a way to reaffirm his right to call himself Tuscan. Amanda’s reply, however, comes promptly, and leaves no room for negotiation: despite his supposed preference for Tuscany and the Tuscan dialect (“perché ti pia- /preferisci la toscana”, lines 54-55), according to her, he does not satisfy the criteria to be considered Tuscan (“ma”, shaking her head, lines 56-57). In line 59 Ivo denies his preference for Tuscany over Milan and, once again, remains firm on his choice not to take sides, confirming his positioning as ‘citizen of the world’, “tutto il mondo è paese”, ‘it’s a small world’ (line 60).

From this moment on, however, his attitude changes and he takes on a more active role in the definition of his identity: whereas thus far he had been mainly replying to other-initiated projections with very vague and often humorous turns, he now decides to open up and declare explicitly his love for both his ‘languages of the heart’. In fact, after the episode seemed to have reached an end (see the pausing in lines 61 and 64) with Amanda’s definitive comment and Ivo’s generic reply (59-60), Ivo starts again in line 65 stating that he likes both dialects “a livello di dialetti mi piacciono tutt'e due”. The pause in line 66 may suggest that interactants are adjusting to Ivo’s new positioning. I then comment on the fact that in Milan dialect is no longer widely used (lines 67-69) and Ivo shows his disagreement, saying that in his household they always used the Milanese dialect (lines 70-71). His turn in line 74 “non lo parlo più però” is slightly ambiguous, as it could both mean that he no longer uses the Milanese dialect because he does not have the opportunity to do so, or that he has lost the ability to speak in *milanese* because he spent too many years away from Milan. The closing in line 76, however, seems to suggest the former hypothesis to be more likely, as, mixing in his sentence some Milanese dialect (“in milanes se te vöret”), he says that he can also talk to me in this idiom. At the end of the episode, therefore, with his performance in *milanese* in line 76, Ivo seems to be willing to do some justice to his Milanese side, which appeared somewhat neglected during the conversation, thus ultimately balancing out his positioning as ‘in-betweener’.

6.2.3 La partita a carte

In the concluding section of this chapter, I present four extracts from a conversation occurred during dinner number 3, when, after we finished eating, Valeria suggested we played cards. The games continued well into the night, finishing at around one in the morning; Davide, tired from work, did not join us and ended up asleep on the couch. Hannah, instead, the only non-Italian person, was also involved in the game, even though she was not familiar with the type of cards being used and the game played, *scopone scientifico*.

Hannah, however, was not the only one who needed help recognising the figures on the cards: the cards, brought by Valeria, originally from the province of Treviso, were the

*trevigiane*¹⁶⁵ type and, in fact, they were a novelty for most other participants. In fact, in Italy there are almost as many types of cards as there are regions, and this is what makes the interactions below so interesting: the game of cards becomes a place of encounter for the ‘regionalities’ of the persons sitting at the table and the types of cards a metaphor of the different regional identities here at play.

The excerpts below present dynamics and patterns analysed elsewhere in the chapter, such as the rejection of projected identities and the negotiation of mixed ones; however, I decided to discuss them separately as they are connected by the *fil rouge* of the card game and represent a sort of micro-context within the broader context of the dinner party.

Once again, Amanda plays a crucial role in the conversation, with Fabio being her main ‘counterpart’; however, other participants and I also play an important role at different points in the interaction, as, for example, in the extract below.

(12) La partita a carte I

‘The card game’

(D3: Amanda, Valeria, Ivo, Fabio & Researcher)

- 01 Am: io voglio le carte napoletane ((fist on the table))
 02 Re: ((standing up to look at the cards)) quali sono queste
 03 Am: che ne so queste forse tu sei abituata a queste no
 04 Re: no no io napoletane
 05 Am: AH: BRAVA [ALESSIA
 06 F: [ma cosa stai dice:ndo
 07 Am: [brava alessia che-
 08 Re: [ma non sono queste scusa
 09 F: [ma va:
 10 Am: [no:
 11 con che gioca lei
 12 F: non lo so d- da noi si usano quelle lì
 13 Am: pure secondo me
 14 Re: [che cosa cambia
 15 Am: [voi siete **pulentun**
 16 voi usate queste qua
 17 V: che hanno le figure=
 18 Am: NO PERÒ ((raising her index finger))
 19 V: =sono gli stessi simboli
 20 hanno le figure un po' diverse
 21 Am: oltre a queste ci sta pure un'altra
 22 che sono le piacentine mi pare le chiamano
 23 V: [anche le siciliane ci sono
 24 I: [(x)
 25 a milano si usano le piacentine
 26 Am: e allora quelle mi sa che usi tu
- 01 Am: *i want the neapolitan cards ((fist on the table))*
 02 Re: *((standing up to look at the cards)) which ones are these*
 03 Am: *what do i know these maybe you're used to these ones*

¹⁶⁵ The adjective *trevigiano* refers to the city of Treviso, in the Veneto region.

04 Re: *no no i neapolitan*
 05 Am: *AH: GOOD ON YOU [ALESSIA*
 06 F: *[but what are you sa:ying*
 07 Am: *[good on you alessia wh-*
 08 Re: *[but aren't they these ones*
 09 F: *[come on:*
 10 Am: *[no:*
 11 *which ones does she play with*
 12 F: *i don't know i- in our area they use those ones*
 13 Am: *i think s-*
 14 Re: *[what's the difference*
 15 Am: *[you are pulentun*
 16 *you use these ones*
 17 V: *that they have figures=*
 18 Am: *NO BUT ((raising her index finger))*
 19 V: *=they have the same suits*
 20 *they have slightly different figures*
 21 Am: *besides these ones there's another one too*
 22 *which are the piacentine i think they call them*
 23 V: *[there's even the siciliane*
 24 I: *[(x)*
 25 *in milan they use the piacentine*
 26 Am: *then i think those are the ones you use*

Amanda, from the Campania region, is struggling to recognise the figures on the cards, and she complains in line 01 saying that she wants to play with the cards she is more familiar with, the *napoletane*, “io voglio le napoletane”; I then ask with surprise what type of cards are the ones being used, because, as I make clear in line 08, “ma non sono queste scusa”, I thought these were the Neapolitan ones. In line 03, “che ne so queste forse tu sei abituata a queste no”, Amanda suggests that I am probably more used to the *trevigiane* type of cards than she is because I am from the north, but I reply with a very firm “no no io napoletane” (line 04), thus rejecting the clear-cut northern-southern Italian opposition she was trying to establish. With her turn in line 03 Amanda is projecting on me the identity of ‘northern Italian’, as she will try to do again later on in the evening (see extract 17 below); in line 04 above, however, as well as throughout the card game, I reject this projection and consistently position myself as ‘in-betweener’¹⁶⁶. As I discuss below, by emphasising my southern half, I am probably seeking to discursively reduce the distance, based on our different geographical origins, between me and Amanda.

In line 05, Amanda reacts with enthusiasm to the fact that I also use the *napoletane* cards, “ah brava alessia”, but, line 06, Fabio enters the conversation to contradict what I am saying, “ma cosa stai dicendo”; I then ask, as mentioned above, if the ones Valeria brought are not the Neapolitan cards (line 08), and both Fabio and Amanda reply they are not (lines 09 and

¹⁶⁶ My status as ‘in-betweener’ refers to the fact that whereas I was born in northern Italy, and so was my mother, my father is from the southern region of Puglia, more specifically from the province of Bari.

10). On seeing that I am a bit confused, Amanda asks Fabio which kind of cards I normally use, “con che gioca lei” (line 11), and Fabio replies that although he does not know which ones are used in my household, the *trevigiane* are the ones most commonly used in our area, “non lo so da noi si usano quelle lì” (line 12). His turn serves exactly the purpose Amanda had in mind: he confirms, mistakenly, that in Milan/Lombardy¹⁶⁷, we use the *trevigiane* cards, and, by referring to the ‘we-group’ of the Milanese/Lombard people (“da noi”), he hints at the *noi vs voi* opposition between northern and southern Italians that Amanda was trying to establish. After agreeing with Fabio, “pure secondo me” (line 13) she goes on with her sarcastic turn in lines 15-16, “voi siete pulentun, voi usate queste qua”, in which she uses the word *pulentun*, ‘northern Italian’¹⁶⁸, the counterpart of the word *terrone* she used in extract 10¹⁶⁹. In this turn we see once again the coexistence of two levels of identities, the situational and the transportable one: the opposition *noi vs voi*, in fact, can be interpreted both on the level of the interaction, that is, as the opposition between Fabio and me on one side and Amanda on the other, and on a wider level, as that between northern and southern Italians.

However, while Valeria starts answering my question (line 14) regarding the differences between the *trevigiane* and the *napoletane* cards (line 17 and then 19-20), Amanda remembers that there is yet another type of cards, the *piacentine*, specifically used in Milan (“no però”, line 18, “oltre a queste ci sta pure un'altra/che sono le piacentine mi pare le chiamano”, lines 21-22). In line 25 Ivo confirms that this is true, “a milano si usano le piacentine”. The conversational value of Ivo’s turn, however, is quite different from the one of Fabio’s turn in line 12: whereas Fabio’s reference to the ‘we-group’ of *lombardi* (“da noi si usano quelle lì”), implied his own positioning as a member of such group, Ivo’s turn is neutral, as he reports a fact, “a milano si usano le piacentine”, as an outsider would. This behaviour is consistent with the attitude he displayed in extract 11 towards his hometown of Milan.

The discussion then focuses on the differences between the figures on the *trevigiane* and those on the *napoletane* cards; as the following extract shows, Amanda and Fabio are now fully involved in the northern-southern Italian opposition and the differences in the representations on the cards become a metaphor of regional characteristics and peculiarities.

¹⁶⁷ We have no way to disambiguate whether with the expression “da noi” Fabio is referring to Milan and its outskirts or more generally to the Lombardy region.

¹⁶⁸ The word *polentoni* is used to refer to northern Italians in a sarcastic and slightly derogatory way. The word derives from the word *polenta*, one of the most iconic dishes of northern Italy and it is used by southern Italians as counterpart of *terroni*. The form *pulentun* used by Amanda in the passage above mimics the pronunciation of the word in the Lombard dialect.

¹⁶⁹ See p.222 below for a comment on her use of this Lombard dialectal expression.

(13) La partita a carte II

(D3: Amanda, Valeria, Fabio)

01 Am: che cacchio di carte sono
02 F: ((looking at the packet)) queste sono:
03 V: sono carte trevigiane;
04 F: dal negro
05 V: sì
06 Am: ma da la marca è quella
07 pure noi le mie napoletane sono dal negro ma
08 quello che cambia è sono le carte
09 più più basse belle tarchiate
10 queste son lunghe fini ((hand gesture))
11 (1.2)
12 Am: quelle son invece [belle tra-
13 F: [per gli snob nordici
14 Am: tracagnotte [come noi
15 F: [per gli snob nordici

01 Am: *what bloody kind of cards are they*
02 F: *((looking at the packet)) these are:*
03 V: *they are trevigiane cards*
04 F: *dal negro*
05 V: *yes*
06 Am: *but t- the brand is the same*
07 *for us as well my napoletane are dal negro but*
08 *what is different is it is the cards*
09 *sh shorter nice and fatty*
10 *these ones are long skinny ((hand gesture))*
11 (1.2)
12 Am: *those ones are instead [nice and ch-*
13 F: *[for the northern snobs*
14 Am: *chunky [like us*
15 F: *[for the northern snobs*

In the lines above Amanda explains to Fabio that whereas the brand of the *trevigiane* and the *napoletane* cards is the same, *Dal Negro*, they still differ from each other in the way figures are represented (lines 06-08). Amanda's words sarcastically suggest that the physical traits of the figures on the cards mirror those of the people of the region in which those cards are used: while the *trevigiane* have tall and slender figures, the *napoletane* ones are shorter and chubbier. The adjectives used to refer to Neapolitan cards ("belle tarchiate", line 09 and "belle tracagnotte", lines 12 and 14), although not flattering in their own right, are used by Amanda with a positive connotation, as they imply the idea of southern Italians as nice, amicable people; her description of the figures on the *trevigiane* cards, instead, is definitely negative, as we can infer from the use of the adjectives *lungo* and *fine* instead of more positive alternatives such as *alto e snello*, and from her hand gesture (line 10) alluding to someone excessively tall and skinny. Her facial expression also supports the hand gesture, expressing dislike for the northern figure. In line 14 she makes this comparison explicit, "tracagnotte come noi", using once again the pronoun *noi* to

express affiliation to the ‘southern Italian’ category. Fabio’s reply in line 13 “per gli snob nordici”, repeated in line 15, is self-humorously derogatory towards northern Italians, and seems to suggest an alignment with Amanda’s sarcastic comments. This temporary shift in Fabio’s positioning, now showing disaffiliation from the category of northern Italian, is compatible with his mixed regional identity and with the lack of attachment to his region of origin he displayed on other occasions (see for example extract 8 above).

The alignment between Fabio and Amanda, however, is short lived: soon after, Fabio goes on to jokingly ‘counter attack’ southern Italians.

(14) La partita a carte III

(D3: Amanda, Valeria, Fabio & Researcher)

01 Re: voi il cavallo non ce l'avete
 02 Am: come no sì che ce l'abbiamo
 03 sono tali e quali
 04 i segni sono gli stessi cambia solo il disegno
 05 come sta disegnato
 06 mo vi porto (x)
 07 vi porto le mie
 08 F: [il tre di bastoni qua sono tre bastoni così
 09 Re: [ma io penso che (x)uguali (x)
 10 F: e lì sono tre bastoni ((hand gesture))
 11 tre clave ((looking at Am))
 12 Am: eh: tu lo vedi che c'è il classico bastone
 13 il bastone quello là:
 14 [l'icona del bastone
 15 F: [e perché giù siete:
 16 a: animaleschi giù avete delle clave
 17 V: e va beh dai @
 18 Am: ((pushing F away)) ma tu
 19 ((pointing at Re)) lei lo può di' ma tu
 20 ((purse hand)) mezzo: napoletana-
 21 Re: ma io so pugliese:
 22 F: lei è mezza [terronea come me
 23 Am: [AH: e va beh tu sei ancora più terronea

01 Re: you don't have the horse
 02 Am: why not of course we have it
 03 they are exactly the same
 04 the suits are the same it's just the picture that is different
 05 the way it is drawn
 06 now i'll bring you (x)
 07 i'll bring you mines
 08 F: [the three of bastoni here it's three sticks like this
 09 Re: [but i think that (x) the same(x)
 10 F: and there it's three sticks ((hand gesture))
 11 three clubs ((looking at Am))
 12 Am: eh: you see that there's the typical stick
 13 the stick the one:
 14 [the icon of the bastoni
 15 F: [and because down there you are:

16 *b: bestial down there you have clubs*
 17 V: *allright come on @*
 18 Am: *((pushing F away)) but you*
 19 *((pointing at Re)) she can say that but you*
 20 *((purse hand)) half: neapoleta-*
 21 Re: *but i am puglie:se:*
 22 F: *she is half [terrone like me*
 23 Am: *[AH: allright you're even more terrone*

The conversation is still on the same topic as extract 13, that is, the differences between the *trevigiane* and the *napoletane* cards. In line 08 Fabio introduces the example of the “tre di bastoni” (line 08) and continues in line 11 adding that in the Neapolitan cards the *bastoni*, ‘sticks’, actually look like three clubs. Amanda does not seem to pick up the sarcasm in Fabio’s words, in fact, she describes the stick on the *napoletane* cards in quite different terms: she refers to it as “il classico bastone” (line 12) and again as “l’icona del bastone” (line 14), therefore supporting once again the beauty, and to an extent the superiority, of the Neapolitan cards. As his allusion (line 10) did not achieve the desired effect, in lines 15-16, Fabio makes his joke explicit: the sticks on the Neapolitan cards look like three clubs because people from the south are “animaleschi”, ‘bestial’. The joke cannot be missed this time, and Amanda’s reply comes promptly: sitting next to Fabio, she pushes him away with her hand and protests against Fabio’s joke by contesting his identity of northern Italian “ma tu/mezzo napoletano” (lines 19-20).

With her turn in lines 18-20, however, not only is she challenging Fabio’s positioning as northern Italian, but, by pointing at me and saying “lei lo può dì” (line 19), she is at the same time projecting again on me the identity of ‘pure’ northerner. As I did in extract 11, however, I reject this projection and emphatically defend my *meridionalità*, my being half southerner, “ma io sono pugliese” (line 21), prolonging the /e/ sound to express my disappointment. Both Fabio and Amanda seem to accept my positioning this time: Fabio, “lei è mezza terrone come me”, line 22, brings up again the word *terrone*, establishing the ‘we-group’ of the ‘half southerners’ to which both he and I belong; Amanda accepts with a loud response cry the new positioning (line 23) and, based on the fact that the Puglia region is located further South in Italy than Campania, she defines me as “ancora più terrone” than Fabio and her.

This positioning seems to find a confirmation in the extract below, where Amanda defines me and Fabio as follows.

(15) La partita a carte IV

(D3: Amanda, Valeria, Fabio)

01 F: *((reading the packet of cards)) teodomiro dal negro*
 02 Am: *di dov'era sto tizio*
 03 F: *[di treviso*
 04 V: *[di treviso*
 05 Am: *ah:*

06 F: **t'e capì** eh:
 07 Am: e vabbò tu non sei trevigiano
 08 tu sei **lumbàrd**
 09 e metà pure napoletano quindi
 10 F: cazzo che disdetta
 11 traggedie
 12 Am: ((pointing at Re)) quella è mezza barese eheh: ((hand
 13 gesture))
 14 F: barese
 15 Am: ((to Fabio)) menomale ti salvi tu

01 F: ((reading the packet of cards)) *teodomirol dal negro*
 02 Am: *where was this guy from*
 03 F: *[from treviso*
 04 V: *[from treviso*
 05 Am: *oh:*
 06 F: *you see ah:*
 07 Am: *alright you are not trevigiano*
 08 *you are lombard*
 09 *and half also neapolitan so*
 10 F: *bugger how disappointing*
 11 *what a tragedy*
 12 Am: ((pointing at Re)) *she is half barese eheh: ((hand*
 13 *gesture))*
 14 F: *barese*
 15 Am: ((to Fabio)) *that's good you got away with it*

In line 01 Fabio reads out the name written on the packet of cards, *Teodomirol Dal Negro*, and, after Amanda asks where he was from, “di dov’era sto tizio”, line 02, both Fabio and Valeria reply he was from Treviso (lines 03 and 04); after Amanda’s response cry (line 05), Fabio, resuming the rivalry between northern and southern Italians, jokingly provokes Amanda using a Lombard expression “t’e capì” (line 06), *hai capito* in standard Italian, proudly highlighting the fact that the inventor of the cards was a northern Italian. Amanda, however, promptly replies that Fabio is not from Treviso (line 07), therefore he cannot boast the merit of having Dal Negro as a *conciittadino*, a fellow townsman. She then goes on to redefine Fabio’s regional identity referring to him first as Lombard, “tu sei lumbard” (line 08), as opposed to *trevigiano* or *veneto*, then as half Neapolitan, “e metà pure napoletano” (line 09). Her use of the word *lumbard* in line 08 echoes that of *pulentun* in line 15 of extract 12 above and presents the characteristics of what Rampton (1995) defined as *language crossing*: she is sarcastically using the language of a social group to which she does not belong - the group of *milanesi* or *lombardi* - in order to express her disaffiliation from such group and to perpetrate the opposition between northern and southern Italians she has been establishing throughout the episode.

Going back to the analysis of extract 15, after Fabio’s sarcastically disappointed reply (lines 10-11), Amanda then points at me and defines me as “mezza barese” (line 12), emphasizing her words with a hand gesture that suggests that neither of us can actually claim

northern origins (she moves her hand in circles in front of her). When Fabio echoes her word “barese” (line 14) she repeats almost the same words she said to him in extract 10, “menomale ti salvi tu”, to show appreciation of his Neapolitan half as opposed to my *barese* one, and finally express solidarity after they had been constantly picking on each other throughout most of the card game.

To conclude, the card game became a place of encounter for regional differences among participants and a metaphoric ground on which to base the contraposition between their sub-national identities. Amanda’s efforts to establish a simplistic northerner-southerner opposition, however, are not entirely successful, as her main interlocutors, Fabio and I, are both ‘in-betweeners’ with this regard.

In the interactions between Fabio and Amanda, Amanda is the one projecting on him the identity of half southerner, mostly accepted by Fabio, and the two eventually reach an alignment based on Fabio’s link with the Campania region. The conversational dynamics between Amanda and me, instead, are quite different: she repeatedly tries to project on me the identity of ‘pure’ northerner, and I consistently reject it, foregrounding instead my status as ‘half southerner’, possibly as a strategy to reduce the distance between me and her. Despite her final acknowledgment of my southern half, however, we never reach an alignment: both in extract 14 and 15, Amanda emphasizes the differences between our origins, categorising me as “ancora più terrona”, in one instance, and excluding me from the alignment she established between her and Fabio with her turn in line 15 of extract 15.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have discussed the construction and negotiation of participants’ regional and sub-regional identities and I have argued that this was one of the most recurring features during the dinner parties.

In section 6.1 I analysed the role that dialect plays in the discursive construction of regional identities and this also elicited several observations regarding the potential and the value of Italian dialects for migrants: firstly, I commented on the fact that, based on the limited sample represented by this research and despite the negative trend of their vitality in the last few decades, Italian dialects appeared to still play an important role in the linguistic practices of both Italians and Italian migrants; secondly, I argued that dialect’s domains of use seem to be broadening, as participants reported their use of dialect in e-mails and other written communication with their family and friends. Dialect seems to ‘keep up’ well with the advancements in technological communication and its use in this domain could represent a considerable potential for language maintenance and for the survival of dialects both in Italy and among Italian migrants. Finally, some of the participants have showed that dialect holds a special

place in their linguistic repertoire, as it was described as a real ‘language of the heart’, the most authentic means to express their emotions and to reinforce their connection with their *radici*, their ‘roots’. These findings seem to partly contradict Rubino’s (2009b) study of dialect use in old and new ¹⁷⁰ Italian migrants in Australia; in fact, whereas Rubino highlighted the resurgence experienced by Italian dialects in Italy, she pointed out that new migrants tend to avoid dialect precisely for the fact that it is so strongly connoted as the language of old migrants. This apparent discrepancy, however, can be explained by the fact that whereas new migrants often use dialect in private, personal conversations with family and friends back in Italy, their proficiency in Italian allows them to use the national variety in other, more ‘public’ contexts.

As for section 6.2, I discussed how participants often rejected sub-regional identities projected on them to foreground instead a different, often more local identity; this seems to suggest a more general tendency to express disaffiliation from big cities, like Milan or Rome in favour of smaller towns or even villages (see extract 6, 7, 8, 9a and 9b).

The negotiation of mixed regional identities was also a pattern recurring quite often in the interactions: in extract 11 I analysed the multi-party negotiation of Ivo’s Tuscan and Milanese identities, whereas in section 6.2.3 I discussed how the card game became a metaphor through which participants negotiated their ‘regionalities’, and, in particular, Fabio’s and my mixed identities.

Overall, the construction and negotiation of regional identities was often characterised by humour and laughter, as a way to soften a potentially face-threatening stance and to re-enact the - inherently Italian - dynamic of the ‘campanilistic’ teasing of someone’s origin or accent. In conclusion, I would argue, in Italy the rivalry between different regional and sub-regional identities is such a widespread and deeply rooted behaviour, that its performance by Italian migrants can be seen as a performance of *italianità* in its own right.

¹⁷⁰ It is worth reminding the reader that the expression ‘new migrants’ is used in Rubino 2009a to refer to people who migrated to Australia in the 1990s.

Conclusions

In applying the interactional approach to the study of identity performances in the linguistic practices of new Italian migrants I set out to answer the following research questions:

- What categories are made relevant by new migrants to construct their identities?
- Is the different socio-economic and linguistic profile of new migrants relevant in the identity work they carry out?
- How are interactional identities constructed and negotiated through talk?
- What conversational resources are deployed by interactants to do so?

As for the identity categories made relevant by interactants, I was able to highlight three main dichotomies which seemed to play a critical role in the construction of participants' identities: the opposition between Italian and Australian ethnic identities, between the social groups of new and old Italian migrants in Australia, and finally between participants' Italian regional and sub-regional identities.

As for the opposition between ethnic identities, in Chapter IV I argued that the Italian-Australian dichotomy often overlapped with 'supranational' oppositions such as the one between Australians and Europeans (extract 1) or the one between Italians and 'Anglo-Celtic' people (extracts 2, 4a and 4b). I also noted how Italian participants often assimilated Australian culture to British culture and how instead this assimilation was strongly rejected by one Australian participant (extract 10a).

In the context of the opposition between ethnic identities I also discussed how participants produced a not-so-flattering profile of *homo australis*, and I argued that the construction of the *Other*, often depicted in negative terms by participants, was a strategy to foster solidarity among the group.

I have also noted how many of the extracts discussed in Chapter IV reveal an unsuccessful attempt to establish a clear-cut dichotomy between the categories of 'Italian' and 'Australian' (see extracts 3, 5b, 11a, 12b): one possible explanation for the lack of success is that this opposition is not one that participants feel very strongly about when compared to the ones analysed in the other two chapters. Although most of the people who took part in this research had only been in Australia for about 5 years or less, the way they carried out identity work seems to suggest that the contours of their ethnic identity are already blurred, as they develop their transnational status of 'in-betweeners'.

The new migrant-old migrant dichotomy was analysed in Chapter V, and I pointed out how this was among the most frequently recurring patterns in the corpus. As for the question asked above "is the different socio-economic and linguistic profile of new migrants made

relevant in the identity work they carry out?”, I argued that participants showed a strong awareness of the difference between them and previous cohorts of Italian migrants in Australia. The main ground on which this opposition was discursively constructed were the changed circumstances surrounding migration (extracts 1-4) and the linguistic practices of old migrants (extracts 5-10).

I also argued that in the interplay of the identities of old and new migrant a third category was made relevant, that of ‘real Italian’ as opposed to that of ‘Italian migrant’. The intertwining between these categories was complex and fascinating: participants often established an assimilation between the categories of ‘new migrant’ and ‘real Italian’ (see extracts 10, 16, and 17, 18), sometimes giving out cues of an emotional displacement (extracts 10, 17, and 18) that is reminiscent of the sense of ‘living between two places’ discussed by transnational scholars.

As for the opposition between Italian regional and sub-regional identities, I argued in Chapter VI that, like old migrants, new migrants also tend to display a strong sense of *campanilismo*, significantly reflected in their linguistic practices. Analysing the humorous ‘clashes’ between people from different Italian regions (extracts 12-15) or towns within the same region (extracts 9a and 9b), I concluded that this behaviour is intrinsically Italian, therefore, new migrants’ performances of regional and sub-regional identities can ultimately be seen as a performance of *italianità*.

As for the ground on which these oppositions were constructed, two topics seem to be particularly recurrent: the topic of food and its preparation, and that of language. The topic of food played a significant role particularly in the negotiation of ethnic identity; in fact, most of the examples presented in section 4.2 of Chapter IV deal with food and its preparation (extracts 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10a). Despite the fact that the recurrence of food-related talk may in part be due simply to the context of the interaction, these results confirm the link between food and identity and specifically the relevance that food has for the identity of Italians and of Italian migrants in particular.

The link between language and identity was particularly relevant in Chapters V and VI. In constructing the opposition with old Italian migrants, participants foregrounded the linguistic distance between them and old migrants based on the widespread use of transference and code mixing by the latter. As I discussed in extracts 11, 12 and 13 of Chapter V, participants themselves sometimes ‘played’ with the possibility offered by transference to create humour or expressivity; furthermore I argued that their use of integrated transfers like *jumpare* or *sharare* is not something that goes unnoticed in the conversation, as these expressions required a more or less explicit process of marking in order to become fully acceptable.

Participants also commented on old migrants' limited proficiency in Italian (extracts 5 and 6), on their use of an archaic variety of dialect (extract 6) and on how these factors often hinder communication between the two cohorts of migrants.

Dialect was made relevant also in the construction of regional and sub-regional identities, this time as a variety in new migrants' linguistic repertoire. I found this aspect particularly fascinating, not only because it suggests that Italian dialects still maintain some sort of vitality, but also because it allows for a positive outlook for the maintenance of dialect in Italian migrants, particularly thanks to oral and written communication media (extracts 2 and 3 in Chapter VI). It was also striking to see how, despite the preponderance of national varieties in contemporary Italy, dialect is still considered by some participants a 'language of the heart', the one language through which people can really express their thoughts and feelings (extract 4) and connect with their 'roots'.

Coming to the third research question mentioned above, "How are interactional identities constructed and negotiated through talk?", the following are the main linguistic and para-linguistic features I highlighted as playing a critical role in identity construction and negotiation. Firstly, personal pronouns were often deployed by participants to establish 'we-groups' linked to the context of the interaction or to express affiliation to or disaffiliation from a given social group. The same function was also expressed through verbal morphology, which provides information about the verb's person and number. The first person plural, most of the times accompanied by the explicit personal pronoun *noi*, 'we', was used to create and express affiliation to 'we-groups' such as the one of new migrants (extract 16 and 18 in Chapter V) or that of Romans or southern Italians (respectively extracts 5 and 13 in Chapter VI). The third person plural, instead, was used to refer to the *Other*: in the case of the opposition between ethnic identities or the one between different cohorts of Italian migrants, for instance, the *Others*, respectively Australians and old migrants, are often indexed only through a verb in the third person plural (extracts 3 and 4a in Chapter IV and extracts 7, 8 and 9 in Chapter V).

Another linguistic feature through which participants performed their identities is the use of adverbs and other expressions denoting time and space. Adverbs, expressions of time and verbs in past tenses, for example, have a great significance for the construction of the categories of old migrant and new migrant (Chapter V). The opposition between these categories is often encapsulated in expressions such as *una volta*, 'back then' (extract 2), *prima*, 'before' (extract 3a and 3b), or verbs in the imperfect tense (*ibid.*) on one side and *adesso*, 'now' (extract 1 and 2), *oggi*, 'today' (extract 2) on the other.

As for spatial deictics, I argued that *qui*, 'here', and *lì*, 'there', sometimes seemed to be blurred in the minds of Italian migrants: some uses of expressions like *in Italia*, *in Australia* or *qui/qua*, 'here' and *là*, 'there' (respectively extracts 18, 10 and 17 in Chapter V and extract 5a in

Chapter IV) suggested an emotional displacement of the speakers, who, despite being physically located in Australia, seemed to have in Italy their 'emotional epicentre'. This feeling of displacement is very common in migrant discourse and it represents a point in support of transnational theories on migration.

Among para-linguistic features deployed in carrying out identity work, laughter was by far the most commonly used by interactants. Laughter was most frequently used to express disaffiliation from specific social groups, particularly, in Chapter V, to mark the distance from the category of old Italian migrants. In extract 4, for instance, Davide distances himself from old migrants' practice of proxy marriages through his repeated laughter. Similar instances abound also in participants' talk about old migrants' linguistic behaviours (section 5.1.1). Commenting extract 20 in Chapter V, instead, I argued that laughter was there a way to react to a particularly challenging 'act of identity', that is, Davide's projection of the identity of Italian migrant on Amanda.

Coming to the last research question I set out to answer, "What conversational resources are deployed by interactants to perform identities?", the results of my research confirm the critical role that categorisation and narratives play in the construction of interactional identities.

Categorisation indeed appears to be the quintessence of identity work: claiming, ascribing, accepting or rejecting membership to categories made relevant during the interaction, I would argue, can ultimately be considered what performing identities in interaction is really about. My analysis suggested that despite speakers can and do rely on a shared understanding of ready-available social categories (e.g. 'British', 'Skippy', 'wog' or 'pulentun') at the same time, and at different levels depending on the interaction, the meaning of the categories deployed is constructed and negotiated according to context. Comparing extracts 16 and 19 in Chapter V, for example, I discussed how the category 'wog' acquired an altogether different meaning in the two extracts due to the different local context of the interactions. The analysis of context, therefore, intended as constructed and made relevant by social actors in interaction is the first essential step for the investigation of identity performance in interaction.

Clarifying what context participants are making relevant in the conversation is also fundamental for the analysis of narratives, another conversational device often deployed in the corpus for identity construction: going back once again to extract 19 in Chapter V, for instance, I argued that the meaning of Martina's narrative about the 'wogs' table', could only be grasped by taking into account the context of the interaction, that is, talk about different socialisation styles. Other examples emblematic of the role of narratives in identity construction and negotiation are Valerio's narrative about the Australian accountant (extract 3 in Chapter IV), which generated a fascinating parallelism between Australians and Romans, and Davide's narrative about the man

he met in Ravensthorpe (extract 6 in chapter V) which contributed to establish the opposition between old and new migrants.

Finally, the microanalysis of interactions confirmed the value of notions such as footing, positioning and Zimmerman's classification of conversational, situated and transportable identities both as means through which identities are interactionally performed by participants and as useful tools for the analyst.

As for my thesis' contribution to the study of identity, therefore, the analysis carried out supports the notion of identity as something that belongs to the 'public' sphere of social interaction, rather than being a 'private' matter 'owned' by individuals: identity or, rather, identities, are not simply displayed, or reflected in interaction, but they are constructed, performed, projected, accepted or rejected by interactants. The episode of the *Partita a carte*, the 'card game', presented in Chapter VI (extracts 12-15), I believe, distil the essence of this research, as participants engaged in a constant 'game' of taking up identities for themselves and for others.

This episode also showcases the use that interactants make of ready-available social groups, like the opposition between 'terroni' and 'polentoni', and how these are then adapted, revisited, and re-enacted in interaction. In fact, one of the aspects of the analysis I found most fascinating is the way participants seemed to carry out identity work at different levels, mirrored in the two-fold structure of each analytical chapter: whereas in some instances identities were 'talked about' and participants seemed to rely on a taken-for-granted notion of a given social group, on other occasions identities were 'acted out', or, in other words, identity categories were established and negotiated *in* and *through* the interaction.

Ultimately, despite the acknowledgment of participants' awareness of a shared understanding of social identities, data presented in this work support the vision of interactional identity as a context-related and locally originated phenomenon, and therefore one that is multifaceted, fluid, contradictory and ever shifting.

My investigation of the construction of interactional identities in the linguistic practices of recent Italian migrants also confirms the value of the methodological and theoretical principles adopted in data collection and analysis: the study of naturally occurring talk through an ethnographic approach that demands the researcher to look at data through the eyes of social actors provides excellent material for the analysis of identity construction in interaction; moreover, my privileged status as a member of the social group I investigated allowed me to base my analysis on a shared understanding of linguistic and sociocultural ideologies, thus facilitating a correct and authentic interpretation of the dynamics enacted in interaction. Finally, the sequential analysis of talk and the analysis of categorial work carried out by interactants, in other words, the theoretical, methodological and lexical apparatus made available by

Conversation Analysis and Membership Categorisation Analysis in particular, represent an essential toolkit for the researcher who sets out to look at identity performances in interaction.

On a last note, considering the scarcity of academic work on new Italian migration, I would like to argue for the need for further research on contemporary migration flows, not just to Australia but also to other European and non-European countries. My study is among the very few academic works that tackle this phenomenon and I argued for the significance of contemporary Italian migration flows to Australia both from a quantitative and a qualitative point of view. Moreover, in applying the interactional approach to this field of research for the first time, I demonstrated that migrants themselves made relevant an opposition with previous waves of migration. I am aware of some studies that are currently being carried out on the topic both in Italy and in Australia, and I anticipate that the next few years will see a considerable increase in academic interest in the topic. In my view, the areas most in need of further research are the following:

- *Visa status.* In chapter II, analysing the Australian setting, I have argued that the visa status of many new migrants is hybrid, as they aim to settle permanently in Australia but can only access temporary visas such as Working Holiday and Student visas. It would be of great interest to investigate how many of those who enter the country with these temporary visas end up becoming Australian permanent residents and eventually citizens and what are the most popular paths to do so. This would help disambiguate between the views of contemporary Italian migration as a permanent or temporary phenomenon.
- *Linguistic features.* Other aspects that deserve specific attention are new migrants' linguistic repertoire, their linguistic practices and their language attitudes. Their linguistic repertoire now includes a national variety of Italian, sometimes dialect and often a good level of English even before migration. It would be worthwhile exploring the impact of these changes on new migrants' settlement patterns and on their acceptance by the host community. Moreover, the data in my corpus showed that the language of new migrants, as one can expect in a context of language contact, is rich in transfers from English to Italian, especially in the semantic areas of work and 'bureaucratic talk'. Code switching and mixing, instead, seem far less common and were limited to dinners which included English native speakers. All these features are worth specific attention in their own right.
- *Role of technology in shaping the migration experience.* The advent of the Internet seems to be having significant effects on the experience of migrants, both before and

after migration. Online communities of new Italian migrants, especially popular on *Facebook*, represent a fascinating phenomenon and one worthy further attention. Finally, I would argue, the Internet fundamentally contributes to enhance the transnational character of contemporary migration flows, as it allows migrants to maintain stronger connections with their home country, their families and friends. Further research on this topic is needed to confirm the impression that what we are witnessing in this century is an altogether new phenomenon to the one analysed by traditional migration studies, and that contemporary migration is increasingly being characterised as migration 'in the time of Skype and social networks'.

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Appendix 1: Participant Information form and Participant Consent form

Participant Information Form

Project title: “The migrant Self: performance of personal identities in the linguistic practices of recent Italian migrants in Western Australia”.

Chief investigators: Professor John Kinder, *Associate Professor of Italian Studies at the University of Western Australia*. Dr Marinella Caruso, *Lecturer in Italian Studies, University of Western Australia*

Student researcher: Alessia Dipalma, *PhD candidate at the University of Western Australia*.

Project description: The project aims to analyse the linguistic practices of recent Italian migrants in Western Australia. It aims to understand how language choices and identity interact within this group. The analysis will be carried out by means of audio and video recording convivial meetings, such as dinners, and interviews. The researcher will subsequently transcribe and analyse the conversations. Upon completion of the project data may be kept for further studies. Participants who fit the criteria are being recruited among the student's social network. Initial contact is being made through e-mail or phone call. Participants will be asked to take part to informal meetings where conversation between the student and a small group (4 to 6) of participants will be video recorded. The researcher may also request to perform face-to-face interviews with the participants. In terms of time requirements, participants will be asked to give their availability for 1 to 2 meetings (which will typically be dinners or Sunday lunches) and a short, informal interview (30 to 60 minutes). Participation is voluntary, no money will be asked from or given to participants. Participants may withdraw at any time without reason and without prejudice. In such case, records will be destroyed, unless the participant agrees that the researcher may retain and use the information obtained prior to his/her withdrawal.

Participant

Date

Participant consent form

I _____ have read the information provided and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without reason and without prejudice. In such case, my records will be destroyed, unless I agree that the researcher may retain and use the information obtained prior to my withdrawal.

I understand that all identifiable (attributable) information that I provide is treated as strictly confidential and will not be released by the investigator in any form that may identify me. The only exception to this principle of confidentiality is if documents are required by law.

I have been advised as to what data is being collected, the purpose for collecting the data, and what will be done with the data upon completion of the research.

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or other identifying information is not used.

Participant

Date

Approval to conduct this research has been provided by The University of Western Australia, in accordance with its ethics review and approval procedures. Any person considering participation in this research project, or agreeing to participate, may raise any questions or issues with the researchers at any time.

In addition, any person not satisfied with the response of researchers may raise ethics issues or concerns, and may make any complaints about this research project by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at The University of Western Australia on (08) 6488 3703 or by emailing to hreo-research@uwa.edu.au

All research participants are entitled to retain a copy of any Participant Information Form and/or Participant Consent Form relating to this research project.

Appendix 2: Composition of the six dinner parties

Composition of the six dinner parties¹⁷¹

	Dinner 1 ¹⁷²	Dinner 2	Dinner 3	Dinner 4	Dinner 5	Dinner 6
Participants	Angus (M, 37, II generation Italian-Australian) and Martina Davide and Amanda Fabio and Researcher	Giada Fernando Fabio and Researcher	Ivo and Hannah (F, ca.35, Australian) Davide and Amanda Valeria Fabio and Researcher	Valeria and Cesare Roberto Antonio Vito Fernando Fabio and Researcher	Ivo and Hannah Serena and Darren (M, ca.25, Australian) Fabio and Researcher	Martina Ernesto and Bianca (F, ca.35, Swiss) Fabio and Researcher

For personal information about participants see **Table 9** on page 73.

¹⁷¹ One should remember that Fabio is my partner and that he and I took part in all the dinners recorded. In Table 10, members of a couple are joined by an 'and' (e.g. Angus *and* Martina).

¹⁷² Tony (M, ca.37, II generation Italian-Australian) and Leila (F, ca.35, German-Australian) also took part in Dinner 1 (the only dinner not held at my house), joining us for the last half hour of recordings.

Appendix 3: Transcription conventions

[overlapping utterances
=	contiguous utterances
(0.1)	timed pause (seconds)
(.)	short untimed pause
:	extension of the sound it follows (the more the colons, the longer the sound)
.	fall in tone
,	continuing intonation
?	rising inflection
-	halting
↑	rise in intonation
↓	fall in intonation
<u>abc</u>	speech delivered with emphasis
ABC	speech delivered in higher volume
abc	speech belonging to dialectal varieties
°abc°	speech delivered in lower volume
>abc<	speech delivered more quickly than surrounding talk
<abc>	speech delivered more slowly than surrounding talk
(hhh)	audible inhalation
hh	breathiness (as in giggles)
((abc))	non-verbal activity and analyst's notes
(abc) or (Re)	speech or speaker in doubt
xxx	talk which could not be transcribed
@	laughter