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# Multilingual practices in a disavowed community:

# The case of new Italian migrants in London

**Giulia Pepe**

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## Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate the linguistic repertoires of new Italian migrants in London and the multilingual practices in which they engage. Italian mass emigration has re-started after the 2008 economic crisis. This new migration continues a long tradition: Italians migrated en masse after the country's unification and after the Second World War. In the UK, they mainly emigrated after the Second World War to industrial towns, such as Bedford. In contrast, London has become the favourite destination of the post-2008 crisis wave. In the last decade, scholars focused on the social differences between past and new migrants, while the last linguistic study on the Italian community in London was carried out in the 1990s and thus it does not cover the new wave. The research presented here is an attempt to fill this gap. Recorded data collected through ethnographic observations of social gatherings organised by new migrants are presented to show how they engage with translanguaging. Interview data are also used to further explore and better understand participants' multilingual practices and their ideologies on those. One recurring aspect emerges from both the data sources. Participants' disavow their national community. They often negotiate the traditional understanding of *ethnic* and *national community* by challenging or denying their belonging to the Italian community in London. Nevertheless, informants acknowledge the existence of an in-group style, used by them and by other new migrants, characterised by the possibility of translanguaging. Translanguaging is adopted to negotiate and perform new identities, and to identify *the other*, who cannot be included in translanguaging practices. Participants demonstrate their membership in (or disaffiliation from) the group through the agreement (or disagreement) with the group style. This seems a challenge to the a priori labelling system based on ethnicity and migratory status, which may be seen as an analytical issue for the study of new transnational and mobile migrant communities.

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## Author’s Declaration

I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.

# Chapter 1. Introduction to the research project

## 1. Introduction

The 2008 economic crisis set in motion new migratory fluxes, which, in different ways, involved northern and southern European countries. Northern countries, such as the UK, the Scandinavian peninsula and Germany, received significant migratory flows both from the periphery of Europe and also from apparently economically stable southern countries, such as Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain (King, 2017; Lafleur and Stanek, 2017). This phenomenon has not only been the subject of academic study, but has also occupied an important position in the media and in the political debate of the countries involved (King, 2017; Lafleur and Stanek, 2017; Tintori and Romei, 2017). The countries affected by emigration experienced a loss of part of their youngest population, which has generated increased public opinion on the matter. Sociologically, these movements have captured the attention of scholars and the media (King, 2017). However, linguistic studies on these new migrants are rare. In particular, the Italian case has so far not been properly addressed, as Vedovelli (2015) observes. As the scholar suggests, contemporary Italian migrants' profiles are interesting because they show Italian linguistic evolution. While past migrants were representatives of a linguistically fragmented country in which different dialects were L1s for most of the population, the majority of new migrants consider Italian as their mother tongue. I refer to this new group of migrants as the *post-2008 crisis* wave to distinguish them from the *post-Second World War* generation, and from other previous waves. The present study aims to investigate post-2008 crisis Italian migrants' linguistic repertoires and their translanguaging practices, analysed in relation to migrants' construction and performance of transnational identities. This study explores migrants' linguistic practices and speakers' use of their linguistic resources. More specifically, the purpose of the project is to understand the relation between the participants' linguistic behaviour and the socio-cultural features characterising them and to highlight the relation between linguistic practices and "identity work" (Johnstone *et al.*, 2006: 78) occurring in in-group conversations. The research project was inspired by the new migrants themselves, who prove to be aware of the potential of their new linguistic practices. Their stories, like the one I am about to tell, narrate their new life, a life lived in many languages. A year ago, during the Christmas period, I was at a dinner with some Italian friends. All of us migrated after 2008, in search for living standards that Italy did not appear capable to offer at that time. One of them, Davide, while talking about the decorations of the venue for his company's Christmas party, said something like "*Il primo piano é pieno di* lights *di Natale*, *al secondo c'é un* maze *di vetro*"- meaning "the first

floor is full of Christmas lights, on the second there is a glass maze”. Then he paused for a second and added “*Come si dice* ‘maze’ *in Italiano?*”, which means “How do we say ‘maze’ in Italian?”. I was about to reply, when another friend, Giuseppe, took the floor. “*Come dici tu* ‘maze’? *Io immigrato, tanti anni Londra, non parlo l’Italiano bene*”. With these ungrammatically realised words, which literally mean “how do you say ‘maze’? I immigrant, many years London, I don’t speak well Italian”, Giuseppe showed what the acquisition of new linguistic practices can do. Giuseppe gave our friend a new identity, the migratory one, and he did it by relying on Italian migration history. Giuseppe realised these phrases with an Italian-American accent; he said these words imitating Italian migrants who lived for many years in an Anglophone country. Davide’s guilt was not the use of English, but to point out his inability to recall the Italian word for ‘maze’. And this caused his mockery, that still continues anytime he mixes Italian and English. Italian migratory and linguistic history is embedded in contemporary migrants’ lives, and this thesis shows this link between history, culture and linguistic practices.

The Italian post-2008 crisis flux led to a renewal of Italian migration, which had been dormant for almost four decades. Since its birth, the Italian state has experienced regular migration, which, at certain times, reached the criteria for mass migration (Sanfilippo, 2011, 2017). In terms of numbers, post-2008 crisis migration has not reached the proportions of the previous two mass migrations (Colucci, 2017 - see section 2.5. and 6.2. for more details and references). However, for several reasons, this migration has captured a great deal of attention and has generated subsequent concern. Firstly, this migration has served to highlight structural issues that significantly impact the socio-economic and political situation of Italy (Bartolini, Gropas, and Triandafyllidou, 2017). Secondly, over the last thirty years, Italy has presented itself as an economically developed country, and this attracted thousands of immigrants - mainly from African and Asian countries. Hence, Italy has become an *immigration* country as well and forgot its past (De Fina, 2016a). Therefore, since the new emigration has become a numerically salient phenomenon, the Italian media immediately emphasised that this was a sign of a negative change for the country and that it should not be ignored. Nonetheless, this new Italian migration deserves not only media but also academic attention, due to its topicality, its specific characteristics set out in the present thesis, and its relation with the past. The new migrants are confronted by a long migratory history and involuntarily find themselves within a particular linguistic tradition. As the above story shows, Italians are familiar with their migratory past. Linguistic aspects which characterised Italian emigration are part of the Italian culture, and therefore they are part of the cultural background of post-crisis migrants. When

post-2008 crisis Italian migrants engage in translanguaging practices, they continue - and sometimes challenge - a tradition that has been long investigated. Italian linguistic migration studies have been carried out since the beginning of the twentieth century, as the works of Livingston (1919), Menarini (1939; 1947), Nardo Cibele (1900), and Vaughan (1926) demonstrate, and continued to be published throughout the century. An overview of past Italian migration is necessary to better comprehend the contemporary migration since such history affects post-crisis migrants' understanding of their linguistic repertoires and practices.

Historically, Italians have settled the world over, creating a substantial diaspora (Gabaccia, 2006). London has become the preferred destination of twenty-first century Italian migrants (Alberti, 2014; Tintori and Romei, 2017) and for this reason this thesis focuses on the migration settled in this city. More in general, the UK host most of the post-2008 crisis Italian migration (Licata, 2017), due to the proximity to Italy and the free movement of people allowed by the European Union. These factors have led to the preference for this country over other countries which have different immigration rules (such as the USA and Australia). In addition, the position occupied by the English language in the global linguistic marketplace and its status as a global language (Grin, 2001; Pennycook, 2007) have almost certainly determined the propensity of new migrants to look towards an Anglophone country. London is then preferred over other smaller cities and towns in the UK, mainly due to the job opportunities this city offers.

In describing the post-2008 crisis migrants, public attention has focused on a new image of the contemporary Italian migrant, aiming at highlighting differences between the new flow and the previous generations of migrants who left Italy en masse both at the end of the nineteenth century and immediately after the Second World War. This interest and this focus have been transmitted to scholars who have begun to investigate this new type of Italian migrant (Conti, 2012; Gjergji, 2015; King *et al.*, 2014; McKay, 2015; Sacco, 2013; Scotto, 2015a, 2015b). The attention to this phenomenon is also evidenced by the number of reports and documentaries on the new migration. Among many others, *Influx*, directed by Luca Vullo, focused on the London case, showing the complex composition of the Italian London community (Sanfilippo, 2017). The first signs of general linguistic interest can now be seen (Di Salvo and Moreno, 2017) but these studies are geographically distant from the core of Italian new mass migration, since they focused on the Canadian (Di Salvo, 2017) and the Australian context (Rubino, 2014b). On the contrary, traditionally, Italian emigration in Europe has been thoroughly studied. The linguistic lens always proved effective to explore community dynamics,

migrants' attitudes, systems of values, and the identity issues which Italians living abroad developed (Di Salvo and Moreno, 2017). This project continues this tradition of linguistic migration studies, by focusing on a yet underexplored context, the contemporary Italian emigration in London. In order to understand the rationale of the present investigation, the aims and research questions of the study are presented in the following section.

### 1.2. Aims and research questions

After having mentioned the general aims of the study, I now list the research questions that spurred the present investigation and their rationale.

1. What are some of the features that characterise the socio-cultural linguistic profiles of the post-2008 crisis Italian migrants?

In 2015, Vedovelli, one of the major scholars in Italian migration studies, acknowledged the existence of contemporary migrants by stressing the importance of understanding their socio-cultural linguistic profile. By following mainstream descriptions, Vedovelli (2015) presents them as educated, as speakers of Italian[1] (a fact that, as we will see, is truly an innovation in the context of Italian migration), as students of foreign languages, and as competent bilinguals in English (the second language taught in Italy by law) and Italian. However, Vedovelli laments the absence of linguistic studies on this migration. My project, thus, represents an attempt to provide a response to Vedevolli's appeal. Vedovelli (2015) suggests a list of research themes of possible interest for contemporary scholars. By stressing the novelty of the sociolinguistic profile of the new migrants, he highlights their propensity for plurilingualism, derived from their modern educational background. I would argue that the globalised world these new migrants live in influences their plurilingualism more than the Italian educational context does. The media, videogames, social networks, TV series, and the job market: all of these contribute to put young Italian speakers in contact with a multilingual world. This new linguistic profile, undoubtedly, distances the new migrants from the previous ones. In addition, the different role and value acquired by the Italian language in the linguistic market (Bassetti, 2014) influences the construction of the new linguistic profile of the post-2008 crisis migrants (Vedovelli, 2015). For Vedovelli, Italian now is seen as a prestigious language and thus new Italian migrants are keen to maintain it and they use it proudly. However, I would argue, Italian can be also interpreted as one of the few unifying factors of an extremely heterogeneous wave. In conclusion,

[1] I will later explain that 'Italian', as used in this context, could refer to different varieties and registers of Italian. Each Italin speaker uses a different variety according to their regional provenence and their level of education.

Vedovelli (2015) stresses the cultural distance between contemporary and past migrants, which, although preventing contact between these two generations, allows for comparative studies.

Thus, in responding to Vedovelli's call (2015), it seemed logical to start with the description of the socio-cultural and linguistic profile of the post-2008 crisis migrants. For *socio-cultural linguistics* I understand the discipline that involves the study of linguistic practices in relation with cultural and social factors. It seemed reductive, for the present study, to focus only on social variables since cultural features - which include ideologies as well - are extremely relevant to understand migrants' linguistic practices. Socio-cultural linguistics includes other subfields, such as sociolinguistics and linguistic ethnography, among others. This means that the attention is equally distributed between linguistic and socio-cultural factors, and that a "combination of both ethnographic and linguistic perspectives" (Pérez-Milans, 2015: 2) is adopted. Therefore, the present thesis relies on principles of sociolinguistic and linguistic ethnography, which, as Copland and Creese suggest, can help researchers to answer questions "about communication in a rapidly changing world which can benefit from a combined examination of language and cultural practices" (2017: 12).

Thus, the first aim of this project is to delineate contemporary migrants' socio-cultural profiles. Since post-2008 Italian migration is only a re-start of a mass migration phenomenon, as mentioned before, a brief comparison between previous and contemporary migrants' profiles appeared useful to situate the present migration into a historical continuum. My investigation highlights not only the differences but also the similarities with past migrants, both in terms of socio-cultural practices and linguistic practices. Old sources and data presented in past studies on the historical Italian communities abroad (section 2.4.) were used as a means of comparison. Migration has always meant language contact. Every generation of Italian migrants has developed similar linguistic practices, with differences related to migrants' linguistic repertoire and their attitude towards the host country's language and their native languages (Haller, 1987; Menarini, 1947; Vedovelli, 2011). This reflection leads us to the second research question.

2. What type of multilingual practices do the post-2008 migrants engage with during in-group gatherings?

Post-2008 crisis migrants, when interacting with each other, develop multilingual linguistic practices which seem to have indexical (Hall and Nilep, 2015; Nilep, 2006) meanings.

In adopting a constructionist perspective (see section 3.1.), the research seeks to highlight the relation between such meaningful practices and the process of new identities' construction, negotiation, display and performance. During the events recorded (see 4.3.1.for methodological procedures), the speakers were Italian native speakers.[2] Although they may also speak their specific local dialects, their competence in Italian is high and allows reciprocal comprehension. On the contrary, past migrants coming from different regions may not have understood each other since they were exclusively dialectal speakers. For the present project, factors that could trigger the realisation of multilingual items, such as the presence of non-Italian speakers, were avoided. Italian is the preferred and more natural language choice for all the participants present at the events recorded. Since there is not an actual need to use other languages, speakers' multilingual practices, which in the present project are described as *translanguaging* (Li Wei, 2011), acquire indexical in-group values. Translanguaging allows migrants to index cultural features, personal history elements, transnational identities, and it offers the opportunity to play with the identities at the migrants' disposal. This last element explains the third question.

3. How do post-2008 migrants deploy the languages of their linguistic repertoires to construct, negotiate and display their social identities?

Firstly, translanguaging is deployed to renegotiate and display new transnational identities. Studying past migratory flows allows us to identify some social identities the post-crisis migrants can challenge, reconstruct and perform. Moreover, the understanding of migrants' cultural repertoire provides an insight on other identities which can be contested or displayed when engaging with translanguaging. Secondly, translanguaging gives the possibility to create an in-group style, which unifies a fragmented community. As introduced by the title of the thesis, the concept of *community* is problematic for this group of migrants. Since the wave is so heterogeneous, its members struggle to admit the existence of the Italian community in London - only seen by them as an abstract concept - and they mostly deny their belonging to it (the aspect of heterogeneity and the problematisation of the notion of community are better explained in 2.5. and 3.3.2., while data on participants' disavowal are presented in 5.2.). Translanguaging happens at a local level, within small groups of people with a high level of intimacy (as also highlighted in other pieces of research on the topic, such as Li Wei [2011] and Paulsrud and Straszer [2018]) but also at a more general level, and, I can tentatively say, at a community level. Speakers involved in the project recognise that this is the common way

[2] At one event only there was a non-Italian native speaker who spoke Italian fluently and never used her native language with Italian speakers.

of speaking for other Italian migrants living in London. When I talk about *in-group* style, I refer to the style of post-2008 crisis migrants only. Style is interpreted as a cultural outcome and exposition of groups' social identities (Keim, 2007). For a definition of *style* in interactional sociolinguistics we can see Gumperz (1982), Gumperz (1999), Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (2007), and Keim (2007), and more on the understanding of *style* can be found in sub-section 3.2.1. The use or the refusal of such practices has become consequently metaphorical, since the use - or lack of use - of such phenomena can show affiliation or disaffiliation with the migratory status of the group (Auer, 2007). This status is constantly negotiated during in-group interactions. Engaging in translanguaging can mean the acceptance of a new identity (transnational and migratory), and the willingness to work on a new, unsettled self. Relying on different linguistic resources, the new migrants are able to play different roles, and to re-negotiate the meaning of these roles (see sections 5.3., 5.4., and 5.5.). Translanguaging serves several speakers' purposes and it is a creative force. However, the last question suggests that, despite such quality of translanguaging, Italian migrants also follow rules to regulate their linguistic behaviour.

4. What are participants' attitudes towards translanguaging and what are the implications of these attitudes for the negotiation of affiliation to the post-2008 crisis migration?

Since I adopted an interpretative phenomenological analysis approach (Smith and Osborn, 2003), I believed it was necessary to understand "how people think about what is happening to them" (Smith and Osborn, 2003: 54). Therefore, I investigate the awareness of the speakers who engage with translanguaging practices, their opinions about their migratory experience and their understanding of their transnational linguistic repertoires, their contextualisation and interpretation of the type of multilingual practices developed, their agreement or disagreement on the use of them as in-group talk markers, and their ideologies on such practices. These elements determine a certain regulation of translanguaging which, as we will understand from the analysis of the data, is sometimes restrained and contested.

To summarise this section, the main aims of the present research are:

- to provide an up-to-date account of the features characterising the sociolinguistic profiles of the post-2008 crisis migrants living in London by highlighting the heterogeneity of this group;

- to study the multilingual practices generated by the contact between English, Italian, and dialects (translanguaging) found in the spontaneous conversations of the new migrants;

- to highlight the negotiated identities displayed during the in-group interactions and emerging from migrants' narratives;

- to comprehend the values and the meanings of these practices by adopting the speakers' points of view in the evaluation and description of such practices.

### 1.3. Contribution to knowledge: a new and never studied migration

As mentioned earlier, the 2008 crisis caused the start - or re-start in some cases - of emigration from several countries in Europe. This phenomenon has soon captured the attention of sociologists who studied the characteristic features of this new generation of migrants (see references in the introduction), usually in comparison with previous waves of migrants. Nevertheless, linguistic studies on this migration are still very rare. Therefore, my thesis starts to fill this gap. More specifically, in the case of Italy, linguistic studies on the post-2008 crisis migration have not been produced yet.

In addition, the sociological investigations carried out in the last decade offered a depiction of the new wave which I believe is only partial, as I will discuss in section 2.5. and in 5.2. As it will be better explained in section 2.5., the most recent literature on the post-2008 crisis migration is keen to provide an image, that aimed at highlighting the differences between the post-Second World War and the post-2008 crisis migrants. Traditionally, Italian migration studies presented a standard picture of the migrants who migrated after the country's unification and after the Second World War (see sub-section 2.3.1.): uneducated, poor, dialect speakers. Thus, the communities formed of these migrants were mostly described as homogenous and tight-knit (see 2.3.2.). On the other hand, the post-2008 crisis migrants have been described in opposition to previous migrants as highly-educated, middle or upper-class, and Italian speakers (Conti, 2013). These migrants are depicted as *brains*, according to the rhetoric of the 'brain drain' (explained in detail in 2.5.). However, I argue that the new wave settled in London cannot be subject to this simplistic representation and such antithesis between the two waves is imprecise. The sociological studies on Italian post-crisis migration carried out so far were written before the new migration had reached its peak, which happened in the two-year period from the end of 2012 to the beginning of 2015 (Tintori and Romei, 2017). Since the post-2008 crisis wave grew substantially in these two years, all the studies conducted previously can only provide a partial image of this new wave. My study suggests that the image of the 'highly-educated migrants' - the brains - needs to be updated, since it is no longer representative of the entire wave and this is a key aspect of novelty which characterises my project.

Even referring to the new wave as a community has proved to be a thorny matter (section 3.3.2. and 5.2.), since the post-2008 crisis migrants challenge the traditional migratory aggregation forms. As I explain in Chapter 2, all the traditional studies on Italian migrants relied on a strong concept of community (and, consequently, speech community). On the contrary, post-2008 crisis migrants seem to reject the classical idea of community and, therefore, the usual parameters used to evaluate the sense of belonging to a national group could not be used. This new background has an impact on the linguistic practices of the new wave. The traditional means used to strengthen the linguistic patterns characterising homogeneous migrant speech communities (traditional rituals, ethnic neighbourhoods, family businesses) are not deployed by the new migrants. As we will see in section 5.2., the post-crisis migrants discard the role of the three traditional pillars of migrant communities – schools, community organisations and media (Li Wei, 2018b). The challenge to the conventional migratory practices posed by the participants in this project highlights a radical change in the traditionally studied community dynamics, which affects the linguistic practices of the new migrants and the way of understanding their new linguistic repertoires. The migration affects post-2008 crisis migrants' linguistic repertoires, which undergo changes. The migratory experience modifies the roles and the values of the languages that compose their linguistic repertoires. However, these processes cannot be generalised for the whole ethnic community. The traditional spaces - the abovementioned pillars - where multilingual practices were developed, nourished and regulated in the past, are not relevant anymore for post-crisis migrants. This project attempts to show how we can investigate linguistic dynamics in migrant communities in late modernity (see 3.3.2. for references) and how we can cope with methodological and theoretical challenges that the study of these new migrant groups imposes.

An aspect that deserves attention is the interdisciplinary nature of the present thesis. Despite the core linguistic perspective, it seemed impossible to explore such an understudied subject without involving and dwelling on sociological and cultural factors. These socio-cultural factors are the focal points of distance from the other migratory flows. The study relates all these aspects to obtain a satisfactory and comprehensive representation of the profiles of the new migrants. It appeared impossible to carry out a linguistic study of this new group of migrants by ignoring the fact that not only is the linguistic literature on the Italian community in London severely outdated, but, as anticipated, also recent sociological investigations require a new angle. The social features provided by the last decade literature on the post-2008 crisis are not always valid to describe the sample I selected for the present study. To ignore important

new socio-cultural aspects would have been methodologically incorrect. Having this interdisciplinary approach in mind, I now state the main methodological issues encountered. I hope that research which sets out how to overcome such challenges will be useful for other scholars interested in similar scenarios.

In methodological terms, one main difference separates the present study from the other works on Italian migration studies: the contemporaneity of the research during an ongoing migration. Studies on migrant communities have mostly been carried out when communities were well settled and integrated in the host country (Di Salvo, 2014, 2015; Guzzo, 2014; Panese, 1992; Pasquandrea, 2008; Rocchi, 2006).[3] As such, relevant social variables, such as the presence of second and third generations, and the long time spent in the host country, had affected first generation migrants' linguistic repertoire. Second and third generations (the children and the grandchildren of first-generation migrants) are usually involved in these studies. This guarantees the discovery of contact language phenomena because the linguistic preferences of the different generations of speakers involved were neither uniform nor intergenerationally shared. To be clear, the preferred linguistic choice of second and third generations is generally English, and, thus, first generation migrants accommodate to such preferences (Pasquandrea, 2008; Rubino, 2014a). On other occasions, the children of migrants adapt to parents' linguistic preference to please them (Myers-Scotton and Bolonyai, 2001). This creates contexts wherein two languages are adopted simultaneously in the same conversation, but they play different roles according to the users. If we consider the last linguistic study on the Italian community of London, carried out 25 years ago by Panese (1992), we find a similar scenario: different generations, different linguistic preferences.

This project suggests that we can find preliminary traces of contact between languages also in a flow that has recently formed and is still developing. This represents a novelty in the investigation of languages in contact. This research indicates that even without the presence of second and third generations conforming to the linguistic preferences of the host country, first generation migrants start to develop new linguistic norms that imply the use of two languages in one conversation. Nonetheless, since English is not the first language chioice for these migrants, mixing happens occasionally. This means that my involvement with the participants needed to be strong enough to gain their trust and to understand their perspectives. It is important to specify that I address this new wave as *first generation* because they are people who

[3] Similarly, studies on the American and Australian Italian communities started long after their settlement and only increased in the 1970s and 1980s (Gabaccia, 2013).

were born in Italy and migrated directly to London. Nonetheless, this may be the only generation of new Italian migrants in London since I cannot predict whether this wave will permanently settle in London giving birth to a second generation. Mobility and instability characterise the post-2008 crisis wave. These aspects distinguish it from past waves of migrants but position it within a larger perspective that largely includes other European youth (King, 2017; King *et al.*, 2014; King *et al.*, 2016). An interesting aspect of such projects was to relate traits such as mobility and instability to linguistic matters.

The second methodological issue I had to deal with was connected to the extreme difference between the theoretical models adopted by traditional sociolinguistic studies on Italian migration (see 2.3.1. for references) to describe past communities and the configuration of the context in which the new Italian migrants live and talk. The historical Italian communities abroad are always (sociolinguistically) described in homogeneous terms. Such homogeneity of the previous first-generation waves allowed researchers to put forward generalised concluding statements. However, the members of the post-2008 crisis wave defy generalisations. The actors of the migration express an individualistic attitude - understood as the migrants' will of being seen as individuals and not as members of the ethnic community - and this was immediately perceived as soon as the project began. As anticipated, the new migrants challenge the idea of community constantly. They sometimes challenge its existence and they always deny their membership in it or deprecate the idea of it. The absence of neighbourhoods formed on the basis of ethnic or national criteria decreases the sense of belonging to the community (Conti, 2012; Scotto, 2015a, 2015b). While past Italian migrants gathered in Italian neighbourhoods, where socio-cultural and linguistic norms were nourished and strengthened (Gabaccia, 2013; Haller, 1987), the new migrants opt for different ways of socialisation, less ethnically informed and less homogeneously shaped. This same situation, stressed by post-crisis Italian migrants in London, may characterise other contemporary migratory fluxes, as the interest in a reconceptualisation of migrant communities testifies (Alleyne, 2002; Li Wei, 2018b; Rampton, 2010). In the present case, the strategies the new migrants adopt to react to the absence of a *Little Italy* are worthy of note. The migrants' preference for smaller social networks imposed the use of a qualitative approach, which respected participants' positions. Due to the extreme linguistic heterogeneity of the sample, representative of the post-crisis wave, even the languages exploited by the new migrants acquire diverse values, and this leads to a reconsideration of traditional theoretical frameworks.

Since the values, and the role, of the languages used by the new wave are not crystallised, they acquire new meanings in every conversational episode. It is evident that the new migrants are still in an exploratory phase as regards their new linguistic resources. As the new flow may be transient, as already explained above, it is thus important to capture it now. Nevertheless, the present research was not only undertaken in order to capture the sociologically transient nature of the flow. In this way, we also build up the linguistic picture of a transnational mobile wave, which is still developing and negotiating its own linguistic norms and its ideologies. The present research seeks to capture the linguistic scenario of an unsettled community, and it examines the linguistic repertoire of the new Italian migrants while they are still negotiating their status as migrant speakers.

This approach is innovative not only for the study of the Italian linguistic scenario abroad, but also for other migratory contexts. The fact that the group is yet to be fully settled affects migrants' multilingual practices, the perceptions of them, the uses, and the ideologies informing them. The new migrants can play with the distinction between "we-code" and "they-code" (Gumperz, 1982: 66), since these concepts are still fluid and negotiable for the post-crisis migrants. Traditionally, in migratory contexts, the "we-code" is the code used in the domestic domain, while the "they-code" is the language of the host country, adopted in formal domains which require it (such as workplaces). Thus, intimacy was generally expressed through the "we-code" and formality through the "they-code". However, nowadays, English is undeniably *the* global language (Crystal, 2012), and this element cannot be dismissed in migratory studies such as the present one that take into consideration the contact between English and other languages. For this reason, by showing the fluidity and variability of the roles, values, and indexicality of the languages characterising post-crisis migrants' repertoires (see 5.3., 5.4., 5.5.), I challenge the traditional terminology used in Italian migration studies to categorise the languages involved in contact as marked and unmarked (Myers-Scotton, 1983, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1999; Myers-Scotton and Bolonyai, 2001). I suggest the appropriateness of the concept of *indexicality* (Silverstein, 2003) for the present research. For each speaker and in each of the context investigated, the languages involved in multilingual practices index part of their history, their cultural background, their migratory experience. Speakers seem to use a different style to index new personas, to challenge pre-imposed identities, or to mark differences (see 3.2. for a more detailed discussion on this). As I will suggest, it is impossible to consider English as the marked choice of the entire community (if such a thing exists), although we can argue that English has an indexical value in the identity work done by the participants.

Thus, I suggest that shifting from a community perspective to a smaller dimension of analysis produces valid starting points for research. A qualitative interactional constructionist approach (Marvasti, 2008), together with interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith and Osborn, 2003) helped illuminate the linguistic behaviour of small groups of recently arrived migrants. The present thesis supports the claim that such a perspective may be suitable for the study of unstable migratory groups, and other researchers might find its application interesting for similar cases. Before beginning my exploration of the new Italian community in London, I conclude this chapter with a brief overview of the structure of this thesis.

### 1.4. Structure of the thesis

In the present chapter, I presented the context for the research and introduced the aims of the project (section 1.2.). Following this, I highlighted the contribution of my investigation to the updating of Italian sociolinguistic migration studies (section 1.3.).

Chapter 2 introduces the background to the project. After presenting the Italian linguistic scenario (section 2.1.), important elements of the history of Italian emigration, in the world and in the UK, are highlighted (section 2.3.). I thus summarise the key elements that characterise the sociolinguistic profile of post-Second World War migrants (2.3.1.), with particular attention to the linguistic situation of the historical Italian communities settled in the UK (sub-sections 2.3.2. and 2.3.3.). I conclude the chapter by explaining the sociological characteristics of the new wave, with a review of the most recent work on the topic (section 2.5.) and a discussion of the need to challenge the conclusions of these studies.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to an overview of the theoretical frameworks underpinning my research. I explain the approach chosen, the constructionist approach (section 3.1.), and address related concepts, such as identity, indexicality and the performance of identities through linguistic practices (section 3.2.). The chapter continues with a discussion of memberships and the role of grouping and othering in the processes of new identity negotiation (section 3.4.). A central space is then given to the presentation of a fairly new term, *translanguaging*, developed to bridge transnationalism, cultural expressions and language mixing practices in multilingual contexts (sections 3.6.). Through the presentation of previous frameworks adopted to study language contact phenomena, I suggest the appropriateness of the new model to understand the practices found in the present dataset (3.6.1.).

Chapter 4 concerns the methodology applied in conducting this research. In contrast to most of the grammatical tradition of the investigation of languages in contact, I mainly opted

for a qualitative method of data collection and analysis (section 4.2.). In section 4.3., I explain the need for triangulation and the procedures chosen to collect two different types of data. Sub-section 4.3.1. provides information on the participants in the project and my engagement with them. The chapter concludes with the presentation of the techniques used to process the dataset (section 4.4.).

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the analysis of the data collected. I begin by highlighting the main themes that triggered the involvement in multilingual practices, since this determines the structure of my analysis (section 5.1.). I then explain participants' positions on the Italian community in London and their challenges to traditional elements, such as the national character and the ethnic and national grouping criterion (section 5.2.). The chapter moves to the presentation of data that show informants' performances of newly acquired identities (section 5.3.). In discussing the negotiation and display of new identities acquired through migrants' new employments started after the migration (professional identities), I draw a comparison with past Italian migrants' multilingual practices (sub-section 5.3.1.). I then explore the relation between migrants' linguistic repertoires and their passage into adulthood (section 5.4.). Post-crisis migrants' multilingual practices are understood as means to develop a migratory identity (section 5.5.), which looks back at a long tradition (5.5.1.) and which separates the informants from older relatives and peers in Italy, figures chosen as identity-shaping others (section 5.6.).

The thesis concludes with Chapter 6, where I posit the conclusions I reached through my investigation. The chapter begins with a summary of the content of the thesis. I then address the research questions and their answers. In section 6.2., I explore the differences between past and contemporary Italian migration studies in terms of theoretical frameworks. This relates to the attitude towards multilingual practices (section 6.3.) and to the challenges encountered in researching a highly heterogenous wave (section 6.4.). Hence, my thesis suggests the benefits of the application of a linguistic perspective to address internal super-diversity (section 6.5.). To conclude, I propose directions for future research by considering the possible future of the post-2008 crisis wave (section 6.6.).

## Chapter 2. Italian migrants and their languages

### 2. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the background of the present research, outlining its historical, sociological and sociolinguistic context. Firstly, an overview of the Italian linguistic situation is presented to shed light on the linguistic panorama of Italy, and, consequently, of the Italian communities abroad. Secondly, I outline the history of Italian emigration, dedicating a section to the image of past migrants shared by the literature on Italian migration. A comparative approach was chosen to highlight the specific characteristics of the post-Second World War migration to the UK. I compare some elements of the Italian emigration to the UK with that of the migration to Australia and the USA to establish differences and similarities with the other most important Anglophone destinations chosen by Italian emigrants. Italians have migrated all over the world, and large groups of Italians have also settled in non-Anglophone countries. However, as I explain later, I do not select these other communities as comparisons owing to their sociolinguistic distance with the group chosen for the present study. Therefore, only the linguistic studies on the traditional Italian communities in the UK are reviewed in depth, but in this chapter, I also provide examples of the language of past migrants in the USA and in Australia, along with examples from UK migrants, to show the linguistic practices of past migrants. The chapter concludes with the sociological presentation of the post-2008 crisis migrants living in London and an introduction of identity issues related to this new group.

### 2.1. The Italian linguistic scenario

Italy has an extremely multifaceted linguistic profile (Cerruti, 2011; 2013). The official national language is standard Italian. Standard Italian is a literary language, derived from the language used by Dante in *La Divina Commedia* (written at the beginning of fourteenth century) and revisited by Manzoni in his novel, *I Promessi Sposi* (1840) (Dal Negro and Vietti, 2011). The cultural elite of the country that promoted Italian unification chose this language as the national language, which, nevertheless, remains mainly a literary variety. When Italy was unified, only a small percentage of the population (about 8%) was able to use this variety (De Mauro, 1963 in D'Agostino, 2013: 418). Most of the population only knew their local dialect, and even educated speakers would only read standard Italian but not speak it. It is important to understand that Italian dialects are not regionalised varieties of Italian, but Italoromance languages presenting their own phonological, morphological and syntactic systems (Cerruti, 2011;

Dal Negro, 2008; De Fina, 2018). As Cerruti explains, Italian dialects may exhibit similarities to the Italian language but this is mainly due to their common origin. If the dialects were the languages truly used by Italian citizens, Italian was "used in writing and formal style" (Cerruti, 2011: 11) by the few who were able to understand it. Italian was taught in schools, but, until the 1960s, education was restricted to only a small percentage of the population and the literacy rate was lower than in most other European countries (De Mauro, 2011). At the end of the nineteenth century, only about 20% of Italians could read and write (Istat Data, 2011: 349). In the 1950s, 60% of the Italian population only had an elementary level of education, which went up to the age of ten.

Nevertheless, in the post-Second World War period, several factors began to change the Italian linguistic situation. During the Fascist period, the national language became a symbol of nationalism and unity. This started a process of diffusion of the Italian language. Slowly, education spread into the country, in particular, into northern regions. Scholars have also highlighted several factors, independent of formal education, which contributed to the Italianisation of the country: the introduction of compulsory military service, which made speakers of different dialects gather, and the "transition from an agrarian society to an industrial society" (Cerruti, 2011: 11). Moreover, in the 1950s, the national television station, RAI, was born and the language spoken in its shows was standard Italian, with some very rare regional influences. Due to its strongly educational mission, its audience could benefit from television shows, even if only passively (De Mauro, 2011).

The Italian linguistic situation has changed significantly since the economic boom. The socio-economic developments that have taken place in Italy since the 1970s provoked a strong shift in people's language competence. Cerruti (2011) explains that the passage from dialect to Italian was smooth since dialects generally started to be mixed with regional varieties of Italian. These in-between varieties, which present dialectal morphological items inserted and adapted into the Italian syntactic structure, are identified as *italiano popolare regionale* or, more easily, as *italiano popolare*, which Cerruti translates as "'folk' Italian" (2011: 11). These varieties show a continuum between standard Italian and dialect. However, they are still strongly connoted by regionalisms and colloquialisms. As Cerruti points out, the regional varieties "differ both from each other and from standard Italian at all levels of the language system, especially with regard to phonetics, phonology, and prosody" (2011: 9). However, the varieties of *italiano popolare* underwent forms of standardisation due to the interrelation between spoken and written Italian, and they tended to converge into a common variety, *neo-standard Italian*, which

still presents some regional (mainly at a prosodic and lexical level) and colloquial features, and that many consider as the real language used by Italians (Berruto, 1987). As Cerruti (2011) explains, even today, there are no speakers of standard Italian in Italy, but interregional comprehension is possible owing to the adoption of this neo-standard variety. As we will see, the speakers involved in the present project are mainly users of this aforementioned variety or of varieties of *italiano regionale popolare*.

Despite the process of Italianisation, dialects did not disappear from the Italian linguistic landscape. In fact, Italians, especially in southern regions (Dal Negro and Vietti, 2011), frequently speak Italian (either a regional variety or neo-standard Italian, according to speakers' levels of education, age, and the conversational context) together with their local dialects, experiencing a condition of *dilalia* (Berruto, 1989). [4] Dialects acquire specific conversational purposes for those who can mix them with Italian. Most Italians now use dialects in familiar and friendly contexts only, but even in these situations, dialect is frequently mixed with regionalised varieties of Italian (Istat, 2014). In particular, in the last census (Istat, 2014) elderly Italians (people aged above 60) confirmed mixing their local dialect and Italian - though the survey does not specify the variety of Italian they refer to - in many communicative situations (reported in Scaglione, 2016). Although representing the most natural and native choice for many speakers, dialects do not have a constantly positive reputation. If it is true that Italians are now favouring this sort of bilingualism, rediscovering the prestige of local varieties, it is also true that those who are exclusive dialect speakers and who do not present competence in Italian are often disapproved or disparaged against by Italian speakers (Dal Negro and Vietti, 2011). In many regions, the local dialects are ideologically linked to the idea of poverty and backwardness (Cavanaugh, 2004). This common linguistic attitude did not remain within Italian border only. As Karatsareas (2018) shows, linguistic attitudes nourished in speakers' homelands are easily transmittable in their diasporic communities. In Italian communities abroad, such biased attitudes favoured the loss of the heritage language (De Fina, 2012). However, as we will see later, post-Second World War Italian migrants did not have as much constant access to neo-standard Italian as their peers living in the homeland, and, thus, despite the negative attitude

[4] *Dilalia* is a concept formulated in contrast to *diglossia* (Ferguson, 1959a). While in diglossic contexts two varieties are used in different domains, according to Berruto (1989), Italian, non-standard Italian, *Italiano regionale popolare* and dialect form a continuum. *Dilalia* stresses the blurriness of such a strict dichotomy, and therefore it rejects the definite variety-domain of use dichotomy. Other terms, e.g. *bidialectalism*, can be used to describe such linguistic behavior. Other scholars, discussing similar contexts, have mentioned the creation of a *koiné*, where standard varieties and dialects merge through a levelling process (Tsiplakou, 2014). However, *dilalia* is the term adopted by the Italian literature on dialects (Dal Negro and Vietti, 2011) and, therefore, I will respect Italian traditional terminology.

towards dialects, these remained their main communicative means (De Fina, 2012). The offspring of these migrants, on the contrary, preferred to shift fairly immediately to English, whereas, in Italy, the English language has entered the linguistic scenario as a scholarly taught second language (L2), since it has become the global language of business and of global interactions (Crystal, 2012).

## 2.2. Italian and English: a complex relation

In Italy, the teaching of English became mandatory only in 2003, although, in 1985, a law (D.P.R. n. 104 of 12 February 1985 "Riforma dell'ordinamento della scuola elementare"[5]) imposed the teaching of at least one foreign language. However, the Italian education system and the language teaching approach have not proved to be very productive. Despite the overall acknowledgment of the importance of knowing the global lingua franca, which respects the European trend (Phillipson, 2007), programmes and the educational methods have not been changed for the last twenty years. As Salvi (2009) writes, the short time period dedicated to it and the lack of attention paid by the Italian system to English teaching are incongruous compared with the requirements of the job market. According to the report produced by Education First (EF, www.ef.co.uk/epi), in which the organisation tested the English Proficiency Index (EPI) of 72 countries, Italy is at a medium level. However, the 2018 EF-EPI report (www.ef.co.uk/epi) shows that, on the European continent, Italy is in 24th place (out of 32 countries. Below Italy, we find France, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Albania, Turkey, and Azerbaijan) for English language proficiency. The English language seems to be spoken better by people earning higher incomes. According to the report, schooling and education are not the only factors influencing levels of English competence. In support of this, there are statistics regarding the state of the English language in Italian universities. Less than a decade ago, only 1% of Italian university students were able to understand academic texts in English (Phillipson, 2009: 84). Other scholars have supported this claim. For instance, Camiciottoli (2010), who researched Italian students' proficiency in English in order to improve Erasmus support projects, argues that support programmes are necessary since Italian students have low linguistic competence in English.

Historically, Italians have entered into contact with the English language through the US more than through Britain, and the attitude towards this language in Italy has not been stable due to inconstancy in the relations with and feelings towards the States. After the Second World

[5] Translation: "Reform of the organisation of elementary school".

War, due to the role of America in Europe during the conflict, the US linguistic and social model became more accessible to Italians. Nevertheless, in the post-Second World War years, English was not considered a subject to be taught. For historical and sociological reasons, feelings towards English did not attain a stable position (Pulcini, 1997), and this is still reflected in a certain ambiguity characterising, even nowadays, the discussion both in academia and in the media (Aresti, 2014). In the post-Second World War years, on the one hand, English was associated with the idea of freedom, in opposition to Fascist sociolinguistic nationalism (Pulcini, 2002), and thus it was seen positively. On the other hand, English was linked to an untraditional (according to the Italian perspective) lifestyle and set of values, and thus it was perceived negatively. Despite many linguists having shown a progressive attitude towards this contact, popular culture remains sceptical about English interference and the mixing of Italian and English in Italian monolingual contexts (Pulcini, 2002). The excessive use of English borrowings in the common usage is usually interpreted as a threat to the Italian language and a form of *exhibitionism* (Lubello, 2014; Pulcini, 2002). In addition, some scholars criticise the excessive use of Anglicisims, suggesting that the practice corrupts the Italian language. In a very polemical (and, I would add *questionable*, since corruption is not a straightforward measurable parameter for a language) paper, Rogato (2008) writes that the obsequious Italian attitude towards foreigners had disastrous consequences for the national language. She laments the fact that Italians use English words when they could easily use the Italian equivalents. Her paper shows the general Italian opinion towards linguistic innovations. Italian general attitudes towards novelties that can compromise the integrity of tradition have helped spread the fear of the *Morbus Anglicus* (D'Arcangelo, 2003; Grochowska, 2010). By comparing the insertion of English words into the Italian language to a disease, the feeling of intellectuals was explicit. Intellectual authority has greatly influenced common opinion towards English and mixing. Rogato (2008) interviews experts on these topics, and they agree that the extensive use of *Anglicisms*, or borrowings, can be a signal of poor knowledge of Italian. Moreover, one of her interviewees mentions that the excessive use of such lexical items can be interpreted as an act of provincial exhibitionism. Rogato (2008) concludes her paper with a sentence that well represents the general mindset of Italian scholars on this topic. She claims that "it is a duty to our glorious history of Italian, to our culture and to our country to preserve the uniqueness of the beautiful romance language" (2008: 40 - my translation).[6] The debate regarding the role of

[6] Original quote: "E' pertanto un obbligo nei confronti della gloriosa storia della lingua italiana, della nostra cultura e del nostro paese preservare l'unicita' del bell'idioma romanzo" (Rogato, 2008: 40).

English in monolingual Italian speech is still open, but not widely addressed in academia. Periodically, the issue is discussed in the media[7] (Aresti, 2014), and only one very recent book has approached the issue from a multidisciplinary and comprehensive perspective (Carlucci, 2018). Overall, we can conclude that, especially in the media debates, the fear of contamination is not very logically supported by any actual episode or proof in respect of the claim that English can spoil the Italian language (Carlucci, 2017).

Nonetheless, linguistic purism is still present in the ideology of some scholars and of the general population as well (Carrucci, 2018). As Carlucci reminds us, past Italian migrants, who learned English and started to mix it with their own dialects, especially at a lexical level, negatively evaluated their linguistic behaviour, considering such a mixture as a lower variety of the standard form. The linguistic ideology of the homeland pervaded the communities abroad, and, as a result, "many linguistic innovations brought to Italy by returning migrants have left virtually no trace on Italian" (Carlucci, 2018: 5). However, as noted above, this sceptical and ambivalent attitude towards the influence of English on the Italian language contrasts with the recognition of the value of English for the job market (Carlucci, 2018). It is not then surprising that, as we will also see in the present study, the new generation of Italian migrants understands migration as a tool for becoming more competitive in the global job market, owing to the improvement in their language skills that migration offers (Sacco, 2013). The new migrants see English-speaking countries as a learning resource, in opposition to the restricted (or elite) access to the English language experienced in the homeland. Furthermore, in the analysis chapter of this thesis, we come to understand that the new Italian migrants may be promoters of a slightly different attitude towards language mixing, at least if the mixing is an expression of a changed mindset, as we can see in section 5.6.1.

Historically, although some Italian scholars and the public opinion saw English as a corrupting language (as explained above) and thus they tried to restrain the contact with Italian as much as possible by condemning it, English and Italian have nevertheless experienced constant and thorough contact due to Italian emigration towards Anglophone countries. The next section explains the history of Italian emigration with a specific focus on Anglophone countries. My

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[7] For instance, *La Repubblica*, one of the most prominent Italian newspapers, recently published an article summarising the worries of the *Accademia della Crusca* (the major Italian Institution for the study of the Italian language) about the excessive use of anglicisms in the documents written by the Ministry of Education (Redazione Repubblica, 2018, https://www.repubblica.it/scuola/2018/04/17/news/la_crusca_striglia_il_miur_nei_documenti_abbandona_l_italiano_resa_agli_anglicismi_-194143104/).

literature review focuses on Anglophone countries, relying on studies carried out in non-Anglophone countries only when necessary. Italian emigration towards Anglophone countries has always received particular attention due to the greater presence of both Italian scholars living in those countries and of scholars who belonged to the Italian diaspora, and due to a greater amount of funds granted to carry out such studies in these contexts (Di Salvo, 2017).

In the sections above, I have described the Italian linguistic scenario in order to provide sufficient context to understand the linguistic background of past and present Italian migrants. *Mutatis mutandis*, we can see a parallelism between Italian linguistic evolution and the linguistic shifts that occurred in Italian communities abroad worldwide. In some contexts, such as that of the UK, scholars (among others, Di Salvo [2018]) have noticed a deeper loyalty to dialect, which remained the main heritage language of these communities to be transmitted to children. This aspect is addressed in more detail in sub-sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3., where, after a historical overview of Italian emigration (2.3.), I focus on Italian migration to the UK from a sociolinguistic perspective.

### 2.3. A brief history of Italian emigration

Italy has a long tradition of emigration (Gabaccia, 2013). The first documented and studied emigration began immediately after the Italian unification (1861). Other migrations did take place earlier (Sanfilippo, 2011) but the wave that left Italy at the end of the nineteenth century was the first that was statistically analysed and found to be numerically relevant. Poverty was the main factor causing this migration (Sanfilippo, 2011). Although these migrants are addressed in the literature as 'Italians', they barely felt as if they belonged to a united nation state (Ferraro, 2005). Regional provenance was more relevant than Italian origin (Gabaccia, 2013). In those years, southern Italians migrated mainly towards the USA, while northern Italians started the European migration. The size of the Italian diaspora decreased during the First World War and after the war due to the American 1929 financial crisis. In addition, during the Fascist period, emigration was considered as a national disgrace that was to be combatted (Sanfilippo, 2011). Nevertheless, attempts to stop Italian emigration failed, and the destruction and poverty that the Second World War caused reinvigorated Italian emigration towards the USA (Gabaccia, 2013), Australia (Rubino, 2014a), and European countries (Sanfilippo, 2011). During the post-Second World War years, Italians mostly emigrated to European countries, in particular to Switzerland and Germany (Sanfilippo, 2011).

Italian mass emigration stopped in the 1970s. According to Sanfilippo (2011), in 1973,

the number of people who returned to the homeland was higher than that of people who left. For decades, Italy has been considered a country of immigration more than one of emigration (Tintori and Romei, 2017). However, this phenomenon, that seemed to belong exclusively to the Italian past, has now garnered new attention as Italians have started to mass migrate again. In 2016, according to a report by the FondazioneMigrantes (Licata, 2016), almost five million Italians were living abroad. In 2017, the FondazioneMigrantes established an increase in this number and it highlighted a 60.1% increase in the 2006-2016 decade, and the 2018 report (Licata, 2018) confirms this number. Moreover, the previous year's report confirmed the UK as the favourite destination for new Italian mobility (Licata, 2017). The preference for the United Kingdom is a relatively new element of Italian migration, which in the past was mainly directed towards other European countries (Sanfilippo, 2011). Nevertheless, the small communities settled in the UK, just as much as the others around the world, have crystallised and become centres for the maintenance of Italian traditions and dialects. For this reason, they have been often studied from a linguistic perspective (Di Salvo and Moreno, 2017).

### 2.3.1. The profile of the post-Second World War migrant

As every mass phenomenon which directly and indirectly involves a large portion of the population, Italian emigration has generated not only a school of academic studies, but also the vast production of popular images that have been re-elaborated and re-shaped by collective imagination. It must also be said that the re-start of Italian migration brought back the interest in the previous generation of migrants. The popular reproduction of migration themes in the media, in the arts, in films, and in literature (Gardaphé, 1996) has resulted in the crystallisation of the image of the old migrants, both post-unity and post-Second World War ones, into the Italian cultural background. Academic studies and popular media have, together, endorsed this process. Although both of the past mass migrations have provided rich academic literature, this section focuses in particular on the image of the *post-Second World War migrant*. This is because contemporary migrants can only relate to this generation; the previous generation reaches too far back into the past for the new migrants to be aware of its characteristics.

The first image usually provided by the literature on the topic is connected to poverty and ignorance: poverty of the country of origin and poverty of the migrants who were generally employed in humble occupations. Workers in brick factories (in the UK), miners (in Belgium), waiters, kitchen porters and barbers (in the USA): these were the stereotypical jobs assigned to Italian migrants. For the UK context, Tosi (1991) highlights the extremely low number of middle-class migrants that arrived after the Second World War and the structure of this migration,

formed of people who were unemployed in the southern regions of Italy. In an innovative study of the new Italian migration, Gjergji (2015) starts her discussion by presenting the figure of Nino, the protagonist of the movie *Pane e Cioccolata* (1973). He is an Italian waiter in Switzerland, oppressed by Swiss bureaucracy and by the racism of the local population. I describe this study as innovative because it not only shows the differences between post-Second World War and contemporary migrants, but it also analyses the numerous similarities between the two waves. Resorting to a traditional image of the Italian migration, the migrant with cardboard luggage, Gjergji says: "[e]ven if the cardboard luggage has been substituted by hand baggage, and the carriages of the trains by low cost flights, today's Ninos, despite the obvious differences, are not so radically different from those of the past" (2015: 8 - my translation).[8] Although she just mentions it, Gjergji is one of the few scholars to acknowledge also the existence of diverse types of contemporary migrants, witnesses of a country that did not develop uniformly. Unemployement, especially in southern Italian regions (Di Ciommo, 2018), is still an issue, just like it was in the years after the Second World War. Italy's youth unemployement rate is the highest in Europe (Romei, 2019), with 33% of young people unable to find a job. Unemployment is surely a reason for migrating nowadays as much as it was in the past. Therefore, it would be risky not to consider this aspect when discussing the characteristics of post-2008 crisis migrants. The factors that caused the restoration of Italian emigration may not differ radically from those that, 50 years ago, led to the post-war mass migration.

What differs greatly is the homogeneity of the composition of the past flow in contrast with the heterogeneity of the new wave. Although homogeneity cannot be easily assessed, especially for old communities that deeply changed since they formed, we can rely on past studies and discuss the way they present these communities. It is impossible to prove whether past Italian migrant communities were actually homogenous. However, we can see that previous literature on the matter suggests a uniform description and tends to represent these communities as homogeneous and tight-knit. When presenting the post-Second World War Italian communities abroad, scholars highlight uniformity by providing homogenous sociolinguistic profiles of their participants. In describing the post-Second World War migrants, four elements always emerge (Gjergji, 2015). Firstly, the manual labour done in the host countries; secondly, low literacy and extremely poor education; thirdly, southern Italian origin (with the only exception of the migrants coming from Veneto, the poorest region in the north of Italy at that time);

[8] Original quote: "[…], la valigia di cartone sarà pure stata sostituita dal trolley e le carrozze dei treni dai voli low cost, ma i Nino di oggi, pur con le dovute differenze, non sono poi così radicalmente diversi da quelli di ieri" (Gjergji, 2015: 8).

finally, a preference for their local dialect instead of the Italian language. As explained in 2.1., this element is not surprising, since Italy underwent a phase of Italianization (understood as the spread of the Italian language in different contexts, from the most formal to the most intimate ones) only at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. Nevertheless, this process was relatively slow and most of the Italian population in the decades after the Second World War still preferred - and was more competent in - their local dialects than in Italian.

The last aspect, in particular, is generally stressed since the trilingualism of the historical Italian communities abroad became the object of multiple investigations (among others, Benatti and Tarantini, 2017; Bettoni, 2007; Bettoni and Gibbons, 1988; Bettoni and Rubino, 1996; Di Salvo, 2014, 2015, 2018; Guzzo, 2014; Rubino, 2014a). For instance, Bettoni (2007) explains that the local dialects were the native languages of the post-Second World War migrants, while different forms of regional Italian varieties were only spoken as second languages and they were not always known by everyone. In this scenario, English becomes the third language of the community, used only to communicate with outsiders and, gradually, with children. Rubino (2017) adds that dialect remained the language of the Italian communities in Australia, and that English was then acquired only at different levels according to social factors characterising the members of the communities. The preference for dialect is also highlighted by Di Salvo in her descriptions of the post-war Italian migrants living in Bedford and Cambridge (2017; 2018). She notices that such preservation of the local dialects is due to the nature of the small communities present in these towns created on a regional basis. This actually contradicts what Guzzo (2014) claims about the formation of a dialectal *koinè*[9] in Bedford (see section 2.3.3.). Moreover, Di Salvo (2015), in a comparative analysis of the sociology of the Apulian communities settled in Bedford and Cambridge, maintains that patent Italianness and cohesion are elements characterising the former, while she presents the Italians living in Cambridge as dispersed. Despite such a difference, the sociolinguistic profile of her participants is, once again, homogeneous and conforms to those presented by the Italo-Australian scholars (Bettoni, 2007; Cavallaro, 2006; Ciliberti, 2007; Rubino, 2014a, 2014b, 2017). The same traits are evident for the migrants living in Canada (among others, Del Torto, 2010; Di Salvo, 2017). I do not dwell

[9] *Koiné* is the result of contact between two or more mutually intelligible varieties (dialects) of the same language (Siegel, 1985). The term was firstly used to describe a particular variety of the Greek language, but later it has been used to refer to several varieties of creoles and pidgins (Siegel, 1985). According to Ferguson, a *koiné* can develop from a "complex process of mutual borrowing and levelling among various dialects and not as a result of diffusion from a single source" (1959b: 619). Others say that *koines* originate from "dialectal extensions of a regional language" (Nida and Fehderau, 1970: 147). In the case of the *koines* developed in Italian communities, the combination of different Italian dialects generated a variety of language that allowed communication among migrants but the distinctive characteristics of each dialect can be still easily recognised.

further here on the language of the migrants since, in sections 2.3.3. and 2.4., the dialectal style of the past migrants and its contact with English is reviewed thoroughly. However, it seems useful to conclude this part by highlighting an aspect of Italian linguistic emigration. If all the linguistic (and sociological) elements described above contributed to diffusing a stereotypical image of the past migrants, the role that those migrants held in the Italianisation of Italy is understood even less by the general public (De Mauro, 2011; Vedovelli, 2015). Not only mirroring the shift that was happening in Italy, but also actively promoting the diffusion of the Italian language, the post-Second World War migrants nourished the relation between the Italian language and the Italian lifestyle, which became very popularly appreciated in the 1990s (Bettoni, 2007). If the contemporary Italian migrants can proudly speak and preserve their national language, it is also due to the effort of the Italian communities abroad, who, although not greatly helped by the motherland (Liesch, 2014), promoted the maintenance and the diffusion of the Italian language through an endorsement of the Italian identity. For the UK Italian communities, the exaltation of Italianness was stronger due to their proximity to the homeland (Zontini, 2015). As Zontini (2015) explains, Italian migrants in the UK used to have more chances of contact with the homeland. For instance, they used to travel frequently to Italy and they could call their families more often (as the prices for calls were cheaper compared to the calls from America and Australia). This helped the migrants to remain connected to the Italian character and to be as much as possible up-to-date on the social changes the homeland was going through. In addition, such regular contact facilitated the maintenance and reproduction of Italian identity within the Italian communities settled in the UK, as I explain in the following sub-sections.

### 2.3.2. Italian communities in the UK

Italian migration to the UK started at the end of the eighteenth century and has continued until the present day. It increased at the beginning of the nineteenth century: in this period and until the First World War, migrants were mostly members of the lower social classes - labourers and artisans (Sponza, 1988; 2005). Emigration for political reasons was also important: the most famous Italian exile in London was Giuseppe Mazzini, who wrote extensively about the poor conditions of Italian migrants in London, and opened a free school for Italian migrants' children. Between 1840 and 1850, the Italian community settled in the Holborn area, one of the poorest areas in the city at the time. Holborn was convenient not only for the low rents, but also due to its proximity to the rich city centre where many Italians worked as street vendors. In 1863, the church of Saint Peter on Clerkenwell Road was founded, becoming the spiritual

heart of the traditional Italian community in London. In London, Italians were mostly employed in the hospitality, catering and food handling sectors, and this gave birth to the stereotype that still exists today.

The first important change in the community happened between 1885 and 1890 as a consequence of new laws issued by the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, which meant that many slums in Holborn had to be dismantled (Sponza, 1988). As a consequence, part of the Italian community relocated to Soho, creating two districts with significant social differences, as the people who moved to Soho were the most well-off: those employed in catering and hospitality.

During the first half of the twentieth century, world events had a significant impact on the community. The impact of the Second World War on the Italian community in Great Britain is easy to trace. Immediately after Mussolini's declaration of war, 18,000 Italians residing in the UK were declared enemy aliens. Episodes of violent unrest targeted Italian commercial activities, particularly in Liverpool and Edinburgh (Sponza, 1993). Shortly after, 4,000 Italians were arrested and interned. Many Italians were only able to leave the prison camps after the armistice in September 1943. This experience was obviously very significant for the Italians living in Britain and contributed to the creation of a sense of alienation towards the UK. However, this process was diluted by another important consequence of the war: a new flux of Italian migration to the UK. At the beginning, this migration was forced: Italian prisoners of war (hereafter, POWs), captured mostly in North Africa, were brought to Britain as a workforce, starting as early as 1941. Due to the nature of their work, they were often in contact with civilians, which encouraged the development of social and intimate relationships. Even if the great majority of the POWs were sent back home at the end of the war, many wished to return to England and to the jobs they had there; the few who remained (1,500 according to Sponza, 1993) had a relevant role in establishing a connection between the UK and Italy since they became central professional figures for the subsequent migrants who arrived in the UK after the Second World War.

The migration of Italians to the UK reached a peak immediately after the Second World War when, due to a government agreement between Italian and British Labour ministers (Barni, 2011), Italians were recruited in bulk to be employed in brick factories, doing a job that British workers considered too hard and underpaid. The lure of a permanent, well-paid (for Italian standards) job was strong for people coming mostly from villages in the south of Italy. This was the first time that a large number of southern Italian migrants settled in the UK, in

particular, in small industrial towns such as Bedford and Peterborough (Barni, 2011). Before the First World War, the Italians' preferred Anglophone destination was North America, while, after the Second World War, they mass migrated to the UK and also to Australia (Rubino, 2014a). Due to the similarities in profile of the migrants who chose the UK and those who preferred Australia, I often rely on Italo-Australian studies to discuss the traits of Italian post-Second World War migration. I base this decision on the presentation of the migrants settling in these two countries provided by the Italian literature on the topic. However, it is certain that differences can be highlighted and that, as I will state several times throughout the course of the thesis, the diverse socio-cultural and political environments in which migrants move deeply affect their migratory experiences.

Post war migration came to a halt after a couple of decades. The next turning point in the history of Italian emigration to the United Kingdom was 1973, when the country joined the European Common Market. This new migratory flux showed significant differences from that of the past. Many young Italians moved to the UK, and, in particular, to London, to learn English, or because they were attracted to a social system they perceived as more liberal. It was, however, a more individualised type of migration and probably not a mass phenomenon. The employment situation also changed significantly, not least because of the improved commercial relations between the two countries. More and more Italians moved to Britain to work as businessmen, entrepreneurs, managers, technicians and employees of both British and Italian companies (Sponza, 1993). After four decades of low migration, Italian mass migration to the UK has now restarted within the last decade, giving birth to a new wave, the post-2008 crisis wave.

### 2.3.3. Italian emigration to the UK: a comparative description

Italian post-war migration to the UK has presented interesting elements, which partially distinguish it from the migratory flows towards other Anglophone countries. Firstly, Italian migration towards the UK only became a mass phenomenon after the Second World War, while Italians started to mass migrate to the USA at the end of the nineteenth century, and this continued until after the Second World War (Gabaccia, 2013). In the USA, Italian migrants created Italian communities in the first decades of the twentieth century, while, in the UK, they did this only after the Second World War. Thus, we can say that even the historical community of Italians in the UK is "young" as compared to the Italian-American community.

Secondly, the system of migration to the UK, bulk employment (see sub-section above), gave birth to communities formed of people coming from the same villages in Italy and residing in the same neighbourhood in small industrial towns. Speaking the same dialect, these migrants did not usually need to form a *koiné* of dialects as generally happened in the USA (Tosi, 1984). On the contrary, in the cities of the United States, the high concentration of migrants from all Italian regions in the same neighbourhood favoured the development of dialectal *koines* to overcome intelligibility issues (Haller, 1987). Dialectal *koines*, which have been studied in the USA mostly, were influenced by the contact of dialects with English, from which Italian migrants borrowed several lexical items. The mixing of dialects and the adaptation of borrowings to the dialects' morho-syntactical systems generated the variaties shared by Italian migrants in the USA (Haller, 1987; Menarini, 1939; 1947). Haller (1987) describes in detail the language of Italian migrants settled in New York, in the area of Long Island, explaining that elements of different dialects are found in the language used by speakers coming from different regions. He adds that Italian migrants worked together to the creation of a common dialectal "Italian-American lingua franca" (1987: 397). Haller also highlights that English as well as dialects provided material for such a *koiné*. For instance, in the sentence below, we find *peccosa*, which is the adaptation of 'because', into the phonology of the dialectal lingua franca:

1. "me *piaciss' stu calabrese però nu troppu assai ...* ***peccosa*** *no tantu me piace* perchè mi piace parlare bene" (1987: 401).

(Standard Italian: "mi piace questo calabrese però non molto … perchè non tanto mi piace perchè mi piace parlare bene". English translation: "I like this Calabrese (dialect) but not too much … because I don't like it too much because I like speaking correctly").

By contrast, in the UK, small homogenous communities usually preserved their local languages, being less affected by the need to communicate with people coming from other villages (Di Salvo, 2014; 2015; 2018). Moreover, their contact with English people was reduced due to the nature of the jobs they were hired to do. Working mainly in brick factories and being hired in bulk with other fellow countrymen, their contact with English people was minimal. The situation of those who migrated to London would be different. In London, Italians were mainly employed in the food and catering sector, and so they had to learn to deal with a multi-ethnic range of customers and to use English as a linguistic medium (Barni, 2011).

The third distinctive element of the emigration to the UK is that men and women migrated at the same time. For this reason, the communities in the UK seemed immediately more

stable, compared, for instance, to those settled in America, which were formed mainly of men wishing to earn their fortune and then return to the homeland. The migrants in the UK rapidly gave birth to their offspring and this element concerned the British government, who adopted an Anglicisation policy to integrate the children of the migrants. The children of the migrants were encouraged to abandon their mother tongue by British institutions. To discourage the use of the mother tongue, British schools accepted only a few students with the same ethnic background in each class (Tosi, 1991). However, this policy contrasted with the needs of the parents who felt it necessary to maintain the native language due to their wish to return to the homeland after a while. The "myth of the return" of Italian migrants in the UK (Ganga, 2006) is a factor which influenced the linguistic intention of the Italian families, even if, in the end, the return did not happen. As Tosi explains in his overview of the situation of the Italian language in the UK (1984; 1991), the Italian families mostly continued to speak in their local dialects, and only later did they introduce elements of regionalised or spoken Italian, following linguistic change in the homeland. Generally speaking, the second and third generations of Italian migrants in the UK experienced a linguistic conflict between the host country policies and their (grand)parents' wishes. In the USA, on the contrary, the shift from Italian to English in the second and third generations happened naturally, since the first generation of Italian migrants was prone to abandoning the native language to better integrate into American society. Moreover, contact with the homeland was less frequent for Italians living in the USA and, therefore, Italian was less necessary for maintaining contacts with relatives who remained in Italy, while the necessity of using Italian with relatives and friends during frequent trips to the homeland encouraged the maintenance of the native language in the communities settled in the UK. To encourage contact with the homeland and, as the parents and older relatives were speakers of dialect, Italian started to be taught in private schools. As in Australia (Rubino, 2002), in the UK, Italian associations created Saturday schools and *doposcuola* in which the children of migrants could go to learn standard Italian (Sprio, 2013).

As we have seen, the final element that characterises Italian emigration to the UK is the proximity between the homeland and the host country. This proximity facilitated contact with the native language and encouraged the idea of return (Barni, 2011), even in a period where communications and connections were not as easy as nowadays. As we saw, this affected the need for children of migrants to learn the Italian language. The possibility of frequent visits to the homeland may have also impacted the linguistic practices of Italians migrants in the UK, and not only that of their children. However, this element is not considered in linguistic studies

of these communities. The review of the linguistic studies on the historical Italian communities in the UK explains the linguistic repertoire of past migrants, and this is relevant to determine the similarities and differences of the repertoires of the new migrants. In sub-section 5.5.1. we will see that post-crisis migrants not only do not create a dialectal *koiné*, but they also do not recur to dialect when engaging in translanguaging. Moreover, post-crisis migrants' translanguaging seems to be informed and shaped by the previous migrants' linguistic practices. As we will understand, post-crisis migrants refuse past migrants' translingual realisations due to the features that these index. I present here examples of translanguaging instances collected in studies on past Italian migrants to clarify the differences between past and contemporary migrants' translingual realisations. The following section highlights the sociolinguistic similarities between two geographically distant contexts - British and Australian - and it therefore supports the choice of using studies carried out in Australia to comparatively analyse the new generation of Italian migrants settling in London.

### 2.4. Previous linguistic studies of Italian communities in the UK

As mentioned previously, the biggest post-Second World War Italian community in the UK settled in Bedford. I therefore begin my review with the largest study existing in the sociolinguistic literature about this community. The language of Bedford's Italian community is the focus of Guzzo's (2014) monograph, in which she puts forward a sociolinguistic analysis of the language spoken by Italian migrants in their workplaces. Like Tosi (1984), Guzzo describes the linguistic repertoire of the Italian migrants and confirms that the dialects of the villages of origin were mostly spoken. In his analysis of Italian communities settled in the UK, Tosi (1984) maintained that dialectal *koines* had not been created. As mentioned above (see 2.3.), Di Salvo (2014; 2015) also claims that, in the community of Bedford, the local dialects did not undergo particular contact phenomena, remaining separate and favoured languages of the post-Second World War first generation. However, distancing herself from Tosi's (1984) and Di Salvo's (2014; 2015) claims, Guzzo says that the members of Bedford's Italian community created a *koiné* formed of the three main dialects that they spoke: Molisean, Campanian and Sicilian. Interestingly, Guzzo maintains that the children of Italian migrants in Bedford learnt this dialectal *koiné*.

To support her claims, Guzzo (2014) uses, as a means of of comparison, studies conducted in Australia (such as Bettoni and Gibbons [1988]) where children learnt dialects (and rarely Italian) as well. For Guzzo (2014), the high rate of illiteracy of the first generation of

migrants influenced their linguistic practices. The contact between English and dialects resulted in significant lexical transferences. This aspect, also highlighted by other Italian-American (Livingston, 1919; Menarini, 1939; 1947) and Italo-Australian (Rubino, 2002) scholars, is relevant because it relates Italian migrants' educational backgrounds to their linguistic practices in the migratory context, and it explains the morphological and syntactical characteristics of the language contact phenomena produced by those migrants. For instance, Rubino maintains that linguistic changes "occurred in the Italian language of first-generation migrants under pressure from the new English-language environment, and on lexical transference in particular" (2002: 2). She mentions elements such as "*il carro* and *la fenza* from the English car and fence" (2002: 2). Her participants produced dialectal utterances mixed with lexical transfers, such as:

2. "Father: *vidi ca tu cci a* ***rringari*** *a tto soru pi* ***ticket***

   Mother: e ***ora::it orai*** *mu dicisti mu dicisti*" (Rubino, 2014a: 101).

   (Standard Italian: "Father: vedi che tu devi telefonare a tua sorella per i biglietti/ Mother: e va bene va bene me l'hai detto me l'hai detto". Translation: "Father: listen, you have to ring your sister for the tickets/ Mother: all right all right you told me you told me" [Rubino, 2014a: 101]).

In this example, the items transferred are a verb (*rringari*) and an interjection (in two forms: *orait/orai*). The verbal transfer is extremely interesting because it shows the role of dialect in past migrants' linguistic repertoires. Not only were post-war migrants mainly dialectal speakers, but they also used dialectal morpho-syntax to adapt their transfers. In standard Italian we would have *ringare* from 'to ring' and the addition of the infinitive suffix '-are' is used to inflect verbal borrowings. This adaptation pattern for Anglicisms is also used in monolingual Italian speech. However, Rubino's speakers adopt the Sicilian infinitive suffix '-ari' and this is extremely relevant, since it characterises the linguistic repertoire of past migrants and the indexical meaning of their linguistic choices. Although adaptation is accepted as a normal process for verbs, the adaptation of other parts of speech and the use of dialectal morpho-syntactical elements have a strong indexical connotation which links the speakers to the style of Italian post-Second World War migrants and to non-standard varieties of Italian. By contrast, we can note that the dialectal speaker migrants involved in the present project never used their dialect morpho-syntax in translingual practices, most probably for the indexical value this phenomenon has. As Carlucci maintains in his study on the impact of English on the

Italian language, “Tuscan variants still affected by this kind of phono-morphological adaptation, such as *barre* ‘bar, pub’ or *filme* ‘film’, are nowadays perceived as old-fashioned, sub-standard regionalisms” (2017: 392).

Other examples provide an insight into the linguistic behaviour of past migrants. In another passage, one of Rubino’s participants says:

3. “Mother: *a ggina è cchiù pi* ***cippi*** *ddà*” (2014a: 171).

(Standard Italian: “Gina è più economica là”. Translation: “Gina[10] is cheaper there” [Rubino, 2014a: 171]).

*Cippi* translates as ‘cheap’ here, and underwent a complete phono-morphological adaptation. This type of fully adapted lexical transfer had already been studied by Menarini (1947), who listed them. He also suggested that this phenomenon occurred due to the low linguistic competence of Italians who migrated to the USA at the end of the nineteenth century (1947: 146-147). Below are some examples of the borrowings listed by this scholar:

4. “*begga* from ‘bag’; *breddi* from ‘bread’; *ccisi* from ‘cheese’; *grini* from ‘green’; *cottu* from ‘coat’; *praudo* from ‘proud’” (Menarini, 147: 154-155).

Even these few examples can show Italian past migrants’ tendency towards adaptation. The morphological systems adopted to adapt these items are dialectal. The endings ‘-i’ and ‘-u’ do not belong to the standard Italian suffixal vowel system, but to southern dialect systems (Rubino, 2014a: 40).

Since Guzzo does not provide examples of the dialectal *koiné* used by her participants, we cannot present examples of the language spoken by Italian migrants living in Bedford. Nevertheless, in a study involving three generations of migrants, Guzzo (2014) concludes that, presently, Italians living in Bedford who work in the hospitality sector accommodate their pronunciation and suffixalisation of Italian vocabulary items according to the origin of their customers. Greater integration of these items into English morpho-syntax is found when English customers are served.

Another study was carried out in Walton-on-Thames. The historical situation Rocchi (2006) presents is similar to that of Guzzo’s study (2014). However, while Guzzo (2014) men-

[10] *La Gina* is a brand of tomatoes in cans sold in Australia.

tioned the presence of an Italian neighbourhood in Bedford, Rocchi (2006) highlights the absence of an Italian area in the town at the time of his research. Nevertheless, he specifies that all the participants come from nearby villages in Sicily and that the language prevalently spoken by them is their local dialect, confirming Tosi's theory (1984, see section 2.3.3.). In accordance with the recent tradition of language contact studies, Rocchi (2006) opts for a qualitative study including only twelve participants to understand their production of code-switching and the level of contact between the languages spoken by his participants. Despite his focus on a first-generation sample, his participants had migrated many years ago and this is a variable that must be considered if we want to conduct a fair analysis of the participants' linguistic practices. Their production of language mixing phenomena is surely influenced by their extended contact with English and by the presence of the second and third generations. As we can see from the example below, Rocchi's participants use dialect, but also English, for full sentences:

5. "InfMa4: *chill'è ggent ch'a chiddi* che ***the business… they go around the world to make money, to make business*** " (2006: 144).

(Standard Italian: "quelle sono persone che a quelli che…". Translation: "those are people that to those that…").

Rocchi (2006) also lists the borrowings (mainly fully adapted) uttered by his participants. These borrowings are very similar to those listed by Menarini (1947) and they undergo the same process of those uttered by Rubino's speakers (2014a). For instance, Rocchi lists:

6. "*Balca* from 'bulk'; *chemistri* from 'chemistry'; *farma* from 'farm'; *parcare* from 'to park'; *sciughero* from 'sugar'" (2006: 147).

Rocchi's data highlight the importance of dialect in the linguistic practices of post-Second World War migrants. The participants prefer their dialect despite the formal context which the conversations happen within (interviews), as we see for instance in the example below:

7. "InfMa4: però… ma tu… tu.. *parlamu nu'attimu siciliano ... se capisce capisce [ride] ... me reuord' quando venemmo cà…*" (2006: 146).

(Standard Italian: "però… ma tu…. parliamo un attimo siciliano… se capisci capisci… [ride]… mi ricordo quando siamo arrivati qui". Translation: "but… but you… you let's talk Sicilian … if you understand you understand… [laugh] I remember when we arrived here").

This is a consequence of the very low level of schooling undertaken by Rocchi's speakers: most of his participants left school when they were 10, and one left even earlier. Thus, they did not learn standard Italian. Rocchi's data suggest that only in some cases do the speakers rely on a variety of regionalised Italian, while, for the rest of the conversation, they prefer their Sicilian dialect (Rocchi, 2006). These speakers learnt Italian through some Italian television channels that are shown abroad. Italian migrants living in the UK often travel to Italy, and, therefore, it is also possible that these speakers aligned with the linguistic shift towards the national language which occurred in Italy. Nevertheless, dialect seems to be the most spontaneous language that they can use.

Rocchi (2006) focuses on the three languages used by his participants to conclude that, despite extended contact, they did not produce a "unique and unified mixed-language variety"[11] (Rocchi, 2006: 150 - my translation). According to him, the three languages have different functions and they remained separate. The last conclusion drawn by Rocchi is based on the gender of the speaker. He affirms that, in his corpus, women code-switch more than men do. However, he does not provide quantitative data on this so it is not possible to confirm the validity of his claim. According to Rocchi, this is due to women's greater willingness to integrate into the British environment and their consequent deeper involvement with the English language.

Finally, Panese's (1992) London-based study presents some data collected in the Italian community of London. The sociological aspects characterising Panese's informants are not mentioned in his paper so it is hard to understand the criteria adopted to select the sample or the linguistic repertoire of the participants. Panese (1992) opts for a qualitative method of analysis because he aims to establish a connection between code-switching and conversational patterns. He explicitly follows Auer's tradition and the related literature (Auer, 1984; 1995; 1998; 2007).[12] Connecting code-switching to a micro-linguistic dimension, Panese (1992) claims that only qualitative methods can provide the correct insight into speakers' linguistic behaviours and attitudes. To collect his data, he conducted semi-structured interviews. The presence of

[11] The article is in Italian and thus I present here my translation of the expression "unica varietà mistilingue" (Rocchi, 2006: 150). In this case, the adjective *unico* is ambiguous because it could mean 'unique' (thus, 'different from other varieties') or 'unified, mixed together'.

[12] Many other scholars followed Auer's tradition in the study of code-switching and conversation analysis (among others, Alfonzetti, 1998; Li Wei, 1999; 2005a; 2005b, Li Wei and Milroy, 1998; Milroy and Li Wei, 1999; Oesch Serra, 1998; Sebba and Wooton, 1999). According to these scholars, speakers exploit all the functions of code-switching in order to regulate their turn taking, to strengthen their utterances, to change addressee, to report speeches, to shift topics, to add side-comments, to produce puns and language play, and to topicalise.

second-generation migrants, evidently (from the data published) not highly competent in Italian, guaranteed the production of situational and conversational code-switching. In Panese's data, the classic repertoire of first-generation Italian migrants is clear. Dialectal elements thoroughly influence the speakers' attempts to use Italian. The relation between the researcher and the interviewees is not clear and, therefore, I can only hypothesise that the attempt to speak Italian is due to the presence of an outsider. Moreover, the language chosen for the interviews is Italian, but this appears to be a forced choice due to the low Italian competence of the second-generation speakers (children of Italian migrants who were born in the UK).

The choice to interview two generations together is helpful to understand the conversational functions of code-switching. However, in Panese (1992), the linguistic background of the speakers is not presented and therefore it is hard for the reader to clearly understand the linguistic choices of the speakers. The content of the data is, however, interesting. One of the speakers affirms that Italian is not the main language used by the Italian London community, and that Italian is becoming weaker. This information, viewed by Panese as an attempt by the speaker to re-direct the conversation towards the main topic of the interview, is fundamental for the present study. Panese's data strongly support the view that speakers are more comfortable with speaking English than Italian. For instance, we see the effort of one speaker (Ri) to please the researcher (r.) by speaking Italian. However, the speaker then highlights the concentration she had to use to do so:

8. "Ri: si - non puoi gerali generalizzare [..]

r.: heh heh - brava questa è una parola difficile

Ri: heh hehe […] ***I had to think about it twice***!" (Panese, 1992: 64).

(Translation: "Ri: yes you can't generalise/r.: well done this was a difficult word").

In another example, a speaker has to repeatedly ask for help from the researcher or other speakers since she is not able to express herself in Italian:

9. "Gn: c'hanno una certa [pause] ***how do you say***?

Sa: si sanno presentare" (Panese, 1992: 67)

(Translation: "Gn: they have something [pause] how do you say?/ Sa: they can present themselves").

These extracts depict a linguistic scenario that is different from the one presented by Rocchi (2006). As anticipated above (section 2.3.2.), Italians who settled in London presented different sociological characteristics. The jobs of the Italians in London and the multi-ethnic character of the city offered more opportunities for language contact, and this element increased cases of heritage language loss. On the contrary, Guzzo (2014) explains that smaller cities and smaller communities preserved local dialects and they have been better fortresses of language maintenance.

To conclude this section, I summarise what emerges from these studies about the linguistic repertoire of post-Second World War migrants. All the studies agree on the major influence of dialects on migrants' linguistic behaviour. Local dialects were dominant languages for these speakers and can be considered L1s for most of the post-war generation who acquired Italian as L2 within the migratory context (Tosi, 1991). In particular, southern dialects played a fundamental role because most of the post-Second World War migration came from southern Italian regions. Italian became part of the post-war generation's repertoire only later due to the shift that occurred in the homeland. As we will see in the next section, this represents a major difference between past and present migrants. In addition, it is important to highlight that scholars who described the Italian communities in the UK suggested an overall homogenous picture of these groups where the majority of the migrants could fit into one general representation: as extremely poorly educated, employed in factories or in the food and beverage sector, southern Italians, and speakers of dialect(s). I now proceed with the presentation of the new Italian migrants based on the sociological studies carried out so far and grounded in some considerations emerging from my observations. As I will show in the analysis chapter, my ethnographic observation pointed out aspects not yet identified in the initial studies which were conducted before the new migration had reached its peak.

### 2.5. The post-2008 crisis wave: a new type of Italian migrant

London's Italian community has never been closely investigated because it was numerically smaller than the communities that settled in the USA and Australia (Rubino, 2014a), and than those established in British industrial towns, such as Bedford and Peterborough (Guzzo, 2014; Rocchi, 2006). However, the situation has changed radically in the last decade. In June 2016, around 260,000 Italians were officially declared as living in the UK (unpublished data obtained directly from the Italian Consulate). Nonetheless, as the Italian Consulate itself sug-

gests, stating the precise number of Italians living in London and in the UK is almost impossible. In fact, the Consulate estimates that the real figure is much higher and suggests that more than 700,000 Italians are living in the UK (Degli Innocenti, 2018) and that most of them have settled in the capital and are not listed on the official register of Italians abroad. The Consulate acknowledged that the majority of new Italian migrants do not register with AIRE (*Anagrafe Italiani Residenti all'Estero*), the official register of Italians living abroad.[13] In support of this, I can quote a piece of data published in an article from the *Financial Times* "[…] the number of Italians obtaining social security numbers in the UK last year was twice as great as the number of those officially registering with the Italian authorities as living in Britain" (Romei, 2017). A similar figure is presented in Ricucci (2017). The Consulate thus concludes that Italians registered to AIRE mainly belong to previous flows of migrants. Although the data provided by the Consulate show the expansion and some changes of the Italian community in the UK (as the now equal number of women and man or the increase of the general level of education of the community), I could not entirely rely on these data to provide a socio-cultural linguistic profile of the post-2008 crisis wave due to the considerable number of unregistered migrants.

Another way to calculate the number of Italians living in London is by looking at the number of National Insurance Number applications (hereafter, NIN) submitted by Italians in recent years. These data suggest that, after 2010, the number of Italians who moved to London has increased steadily. In 2015, NIN applications by Italians increased by 37% on the previous year (Barrett, 2015). This increase has started to slow down since 2018, as the quarterly report from the Department for Work and Pensions shows (2018). Nevertheless, the number of NIN applications only tells us something about the amount of people who arrived in the UK to work, without taking into consideration the mobility of the applicants, who may leave a short time after they request the NIN. Moreover, other categories of migrants who do not need an NIN (for instance, students) are excluded from this count. Therefore, we cannot say exactly how many Italians actually settle in London after applying for the NIN, or how long they actually stay after having requested the NIN.

To summarise, we can conclude that official channels are unhelpful and inefficient in determining a precise figure and for providing descriptive data on the investigated group. Only ethnography, despite being limited, and the study of other data can provide a more appropriate

[13] These considerations were made by the former Italian General Consul, Massimiliano Mazzanti, in an interview held at the Italian Consulate in London on the 30th of June 2016.

picture of reality. However, in determining the number of Italians in London, we can rely on the figures mostly adduced by both the British and Italian media (Barrett, 2015; Degli Innocenti, 2018; Dell'Arti, 2016; Franceschini, 2019; Maesano, 2015, to name the most reliable ones) that suggest that between 250.000 and 500.000 Italians live in London. In addition, all the studies on new Italian migration patterns agree on a recent expansion of the Italian community in London (McKay, 2015; Sacco, 2013; Scotto, 2015a; 2015b). For the present study, these numbers are important only to show that the Italian community in London, which has a long tradition but has historically been numerically meagre, has been repopulated in the last decade. This means that we find different generations of migrants within it, coming to the UK at different points in history, from different backgrounds, and for different reasons.

As noted in section 2.3., Italy has a long migratory tradition. For this reason, the re-start of a migratory flux represents an interesting development, politically and sociologically debated (Caneva, 2016). The attention paid by the Italian media demonstrates a clear interest in this new migratory wave. The media were the first to highlight this phenomenon which quickly captured the interest of scholars. Thus, the first academic pieces of research on the topic focused mainly on the notion of the *brain drain*, echoing views expressed in the media. To be precise, this expression was already in use in the 1960s, and it was adopted to describe the emigration of people holding a degree (Sanfilippo, 2017). However, the brain drain rhetoric has developed significantly over the course of the last decade. In one of the first studies on the new wave, Conti says "students, graduates, researchers and professionals make up the bulk of the new Italian migration to the UK" (2012: 10). In her paper, the new Italian migrants are young professionals who migrated to find new stimuli, and not for economic reasons. Conti (2012) started her investigation in 2008 and, by conducting qualitative interviews, tried to understand the reasons that led her informants to leave Italy. Her conclusions suggest that at that time, the 2008 crisis was not the primary factor causing the restart of migration. Learning English, career prospects, and negative feelings towards Italy were the main reasons highlighted by Conti's participants. In particular, the last reason deserves attention. Conti (2012) affirms that the national identity of her informants is weak due to the lack of empathy they show towards the homeland and their fellow nationals. However, as my project suggests, the feelings of Italian migrants towards their homeland cannot be so simplistically addressed, as they are not always negative, and their national identity is constantly renegotiated in a continuous reflexive process. However, Conti (2012) aligns her conclusions to those of researchers who focused on other similar migratory fluxes that started up following the 2008 crisis in Europe.

For instance, in describing the reasons that pushed Spaniards to migrate to Norway, Bygnes writes:

> What is new about the motivations cited by highly skilled Spaniards and migrants from countries such as Italy and Greece after the crisis struck, however, is the emphasis on corruption, bad working conditions, lack of faith in politicians, lack of meritocracy and, above all, the very bleak future prospects they anticipated in their countries of origin. (2017: 259)

Although these motivations do not seem immediately connected to a difficult economic situation, I believe it is important to remember, especially for the Italian case, that the 2008 crisis was definitely *the* factor leading towards and boosting the mass migratory phenomenon. As Bygnes explains: "Recent studies have indicated that grievances about negative societal traits can substantially increase following a crisis (2017: 261)". Bygnes (2017) and Bartolini *et al.* (2017), among others, determine a strong correlation between Spanish and Italian migrating youth. Similarly, the present thesis shows a connection between these mobility phenomena. In particular, the narratives produced by Bygnes' participants present several similarities with the words of the speakers involved in the present research. Nonetheless, the Italian case displays its specificities and it is more complex. As Bartolini *et al.* (2017) claim, Italy is the country that has lost the highest number of young people despite the Italian economic situation, which, for instance, was more positive than the Greek one.

As Conti (2012) suggests, the weaker feeling of alignment with a national identity could have encouraged departure. In addition, once in the host country, the abovementioned controversial attitude towards Italy and Italian national identity seems connected to the social structure of the post-2008 crisis wave. As I discuss in section 5.2., the post-crisis migrants' national identity, which Conti (2012) describes as "weak", appears to be fragile and challengeable. In the past, migrants grouped into communities based on ethnicity. Living in the same areas strengthened their sense of belonging, and, thus, their national identity abroad was reinforced. In London, Italian migrants founded recreational and support centres in Clerkenwell close to the Italian Catholic Church of Saint Peter. Fortier claims that "the formation of an Italian migrant identity [is] an effect of events, rituals and practices that occurred in these locations" (2006: 65). Post-2008 crisis migrants do not generally engage with the rituals and practices established by the post-war migrants (Scotto, 2015a; 2015b). Scotto claims that the centres that are representative for the old migrants are not reference points for the new arrivals, since they prefer other forms of community socialisation. Scotto's informants prefer to meet fellow Italians online, on forums dedicated to Italians in London. Since Scotto's investigation, other

groups on the most popular social networks (such as Facebook) have been created. Social network groups became virtual places where the new arrivals meet other Italians, ask for the help of more experienced migrants, and look for and offer houses and jobs, as Marino's (2015) and Seganti's (2010) studies show. In the past, these services were provided in physical places which not only had the role of helping but also of reinforcing the identity of Italian migrants. As I will discuss in section 5.2., some Italian migrants challenge not only past community spaces and practices, but even the most modern ones.

The new migrants not only show little interest in the traditional community, but also feel distant from post-war migrants. Scotto claims that post-crisis arrivals have infrequent contacts with previous migrant generations because they "come from a country that has changed deeply" (2015a: 4). The description of the new migrant women which Sacco (2013) proposes is an example of the change mentioned by Scotto. Sacco (2013) investigates the new Italian migration to London, focusing on gender equality. In sub-section 2.3.3., we noted that an element distinguishing the migration to the UK from that of to the USA concerned the number of women that migrated with their husbands and fathers (Barni, 2013). In the USA, men used to migrate alone, and, for this reason, Harney (in Gabaccia, 2013: 83) defines Italian migrants as "men without women". Women were connected to the idea of reproduction, and, hence, of settlement, while young men migrating alone suggested the idea of temporary migration. "When women left Italy, furthermore, it reflected a decision to settle more permanently abroad", states Gabaccia (2013: 8). As we saw, in the UK, men and women migrated together. However, the female migrants who arrived in the UK after the Second World War were wives or daughters, not independent women who could migrate by themselves. By contrast, the women described by Sacco (2013) are independent, educated, graduate women who migrated for the same reasons that their male peers did. Sanfilippo (2017), who comments on the increase in those who leave Italy to complete their education, also observes that, among those, the number of women has increased proportionally. This datum on women - and the description Sacco (2013) provides - is important because it suggests that traditional gender roles can be contested within this new wave of migrants. Since women are as much educated and independent as male migrants, they live migratory experiences similar to those of their male peers (contrary to what happened in the past) and this is connected to the new migrants' work on identity they start after migration (see 3.2., 5.3., and 5.4.). My investigation suggests that we can no longer generalise about high levels of education of the migrants, regardless of their gender, but it can be stated that the emancipation of Italian women who migrate is undeniable. This is also supported

by the worldwide statistics shown in the FondazioneMigrantes' report (Licata, 2017), which states that the number of single people leaving is higher than in the past, and that the number of women almost equals the number of men.

Women are no longer specifically connected with the idea of permanent settlement. On the contrary, the post-2008 crisis migrants interviewed and observed by Sacco (2013), Scotto (2015a; 2015b), Conti (2012), as well as this project's participants, appear to be mobile - and conscious of the uncertainty of the contemporary world - people who consider London the first phase in their new life. Sacco (2013) maintains that her informants did not express the desire to go back to Italy. My study, however, shows a slightly different picture. The idea of returning to Italy is surely not central in the narratives of the new Italian migrants. However, it is also true that the people who participated in this study often claim that they will not stay in London forever. For some of them, London will simply be a stop on a thoroughfare. The myth of return is not abolished, then, but is only reinvented as a way to respect the uncertainty of the late modern world (Leccardi, 2005).

Like other European migrants, Italian post-2008 crisis migrants are seen as transnational and mobile (King *et al.*, 2014). In other similar studies, such as that of Bygnes and Bivand Erdal (2017), the post-crisis European migration is defined as "liquid" (2017: 103) and the major aspect characterising it, according to these scholars, is uncertainty. Scotto describes the new Italian migrants as the "Eurostar" generation, using a term coined by the sociologist Adrian Favell (2008), and as "highly-mobile people, who make pioneering use of the opportunity opened up by European integration" (2015a: 160). This definition is relevant because it inserts Italian migrants into the European context of migration. The EU freedom of movement, guaranteed to all its citizens, and Europeans' opportunity to live in different countries, has surely reshaped the image of migration and increased transnational patterns. Gabaccia explains transnationalism as "a way of life that connects family, work, and consciousness in more than one national territory" (2013: 11). This means that Italian migrants may see themselves as citizens of two countries at the same time and that they do not want to mark a clear cut from their country of origin. This enables their possibility of developing in-between identities. Despite the negative feelings towards Italy highlighted in the literature of the last decade and despite their decision to leave it (Conti, 2012), new migrants show a strong tie with the homeland. For example, some participants in the present research maintained that they prefer to read Italian newspapers, and not British ones, and like to be involved with Italian politics and news. In these cases, Italian current affairs seem to interest the post-2008 crisis migrants more than

British matters. The new migrants can visit the homeland more often than post-war migrants could and this encourages the absence of a clear severing of ties with the country of origin. Of course, transnationalism is facilitated by contemporary technologies which allow for faster movement and easier communication. For present migrants, to be connected with their homeland is extremely easy. Through the Internet, they can watch a whole range of TV programmes broadcast on Italian television, and not only the ones broadcast by RAI, usually watched by past Italian migrants. New migrants can read Italian newspapers and keep themselves informed of Italian trends through Facebook and other social networks. They talk with their relatives and friends regularly. In addition, transnationalism also means being linked with two different cultural systems without feeling the need to be integrated into one to the exclusion of the other.

The preservation of a strong connection with the homeland surely influences the nature of the post-crisis wave. Along with this, other aspects characterise this new group. Firstly, we can consider the age of the new migrants, and its contemporary socio-cultural meaning in Italy. The majority of new Italian migrants are aged between 18 and 35 years old (Tintori and Romei, 2017). The average age of this new flow does not constitute an innovative aspect *per se*. Migration has always been a juvenile phenomenon (Gabaccia, 2013). However, in recent decades, the Italian understanding of *youth* seems to have changed due to social aspects characterising young Italian people. If we compare the average age for marriage in 1950 and in 2005 we start to note some differences. Marriage has always been considered an event signalling the passage into adulthood, and for this reason, we can consider the average age of marriage as an aspect showing the changes undergone in the perception of youth. In 1950, the average age for marriage was 28 for men, and 26 for women. In 2005, it was 32 for men and 30 for women (Istat, 2013). This postponement is due to longer processes of education (undertaken by women as well), the difficulty of finding a stable job, and to greater time spent with the family of origin. Not only did the age of marriage increase, but also the idea of this union has changed. In 2013, 30% of people in their thirties were not married (Istat, 2013: 2). Due to these factors, Italians aged between 18 and 35 still present characteristics associated, in other countries, with the idea of youth. Moreover, young people feel the need to group themselves in opposition to older generations that seem to rule the country. Italy is generally accused of favouring elder people rather than younger ones. This system, defined as a gerontocracy, emerged from the narratives of the participants interviewed by Conti (2012) and Scotto (2015a; 2015b). The social factors explained above and gerontocracy, characterising the Italian social system, nourished the idea

of an extended period of youth (Sassoon, 2014) that contrasts with the need of growth in the migratory context.

Just like their peers who remained in the homeland, post-2008 Italian migrants are generally not married and they do not have children yet (unpublished Consular data). This affects their needs in the host country and increases their possibility of being more mobile and precarious. Moreover, this means that they are not creating familiar nuclei, but, instead, their ties and social networks are based on chains of acquaintances. The strength of these ties is variable and may be extremely flexible. These aspects represent a true innovation in the patterns of Italian migration, which were previously generally based on familial ties (Rubino, 2014a).

There exists another element that is seen as an important difference between past and new migrants in the first studies on the new Italian migration. Scotto (2010; 2015a; 2015b), who based his research on the sociological differences between post-war and post-crisis flows, presents the new migrants as highly-educated professionals who were tired of the Italian mindset. This is the same image of the new wave as outlined by Conti (2012) and Sacco (2013), who reinforced the stereotype suggested by the Italian media. Compared to post-Second World War migrants, who in some cases were illiterate, post-crisis migrants are certainly more educated. In 1950, 13% of Italians were illiterate (De Mauro, 2011). This figure increases if we look at the regional percentages. In the south of Italy, where most of the migrants came from, 30% of the population was illiterate (Istat, 2011). Moreover, post-Second World War migrants belonged to the poorest social classes, and, thus, the rate of total or partial illiteracy was extremely high among them. On the contrary, in 2011, only 1% of the Italian population was completely illiterate. This justifies Scotto's claims about the clear distinction between old migrants and his informants, who are mostly graduates. The image provided by the first studies on the new Italian migration not only aligns with that provided by the media, but also reinforces the separation between old and new migrants.

Nevertheless, as Tintori and Romei (2017) highlight, we must be careful in drawing such a definite distinction. Tintori and Romei affirm that the new migration reached its peak in the two-year period starting at end of 2012 and terminated at the beginning of 2015. They explain that this happened because, in Italy, the recession (that affected all southern European countries) worsened in 2012 and, until 2015, there were no signs of economic growth. This substantial enlargement of the flux does not allow us to provide the same homogeneous picture of the new flow as those provided by Conti (2012), Sacco (2013) and Scotto (2015a; 2015b). For

instance, the sample I selected for my study shows that the new wave is not only formed of graduates and professionals, but of a whole range of young Italians who left the country for economic reasons, and present extremely variable educational backgrounds. We do indeed find graduates working in the financial and in other economically prestigious sectors, but also migrants who, despite their high level of education, are working in the food and beverage sector as waiters and waitresses owing to their lack of competence in English. In her analysis of young Italians living in London, McKay maintains that "the jobs that young Italians are likely to be found are in the low paid sectors" (2015: 77). However, she only mentions this issue without dwelling on it further. I would argue that this is a key element for highlighting the heterogeneous structure of the post-2008 crisis wave. New Italian migrants work in very different sectors, contrary to what happened after the Second-World War. The work variety respects the diversity of linguistic competences and the level of education of post-crisis migrants. This aspect is relevant since the workplace greatly influences the migrants' linguistic repertoire (Gonçalves and Schluter, 2017) and it does play a huge role in the attitudes towards multilingualism and multilingual practices, as we understand from the data analysis chapter.

In the last decade sociological literature on the post-crisis migrants, such variety of educational levels, linguistic competences and workplacement is often ignored. In the description of the post-2008 crisis wave, the presence of migrants who did not complete their studies and who dropped out of school to start work is mostly neglected. This is functional to the antithetic depiction suggested by the most recent migration literature and the media. While past migrants are always described as poorly educated, the post-crisis migrants are presented as highly educated (and thus competent in English [Vedovelli, 2015]). The level of education of past and contemporary migrants stand as main difference of the two waves (Conti, 2012; Sacco, 2013). However, this type of depiction might not be entirely correct. In Italy, compulsory education ends at the age of 16 but the index of school drop-outs is still high (around 16% according to Istat data). In some regions of Italy, young people drop out of school to work seasonally. The 2008 crisis thoroughly affected the sectors in which these types of workers were employed. As a consequence, in the post-2008 crisis flow, we also find poorly educated migrants who came to London 'to earn their fortune'. Romei, describing Italian emigrants around the world generally, claims that "Italian emigrants are also more highly educated than the overall Italian population and university trained people are leaving in increasing numbers. Graduates make up about 30 per cent of emigrants from Italy" (Romei, 2017).[14] The interpretation of this datum

[14] www.ft.com/content/cb9bd2ee-c07d-11e7-9836-b25f8adaa111

can be twofold. At a first glance, one can determine that the new Italian emigration is mostly formed of highly educated people. However, we need to consider Italian history in more detail to better interpret this information. In Italy, higher education became accessible to a larger number of people only after the Second World War and the number of young people enrolling in university largely increased only in the 1990s. This increasing trend has not stopped yet (Bratti, Checchi and De Blasio, 2008). Therefore, the new Italian migrants are those who have experienced the higher education boom. It is then obvious that, since mainly young people emigrate, Italian migration is more educated than the rest of Italy in general. I believe it is important to highlight, nevertheless, that 30% does not represent a majority.

For this reason, the educational level of the new migrants cannot be the core or sole distinction between old and new Italian migrants. On the other hand, there is an element that may signal a clearer separation: their linguistic repertoire. As Campolo (2009) and Tosi (1991) explain for the Australian and British contexts respectively, elementary educated migrants had a very poor knowledge of the regional varieties of Italian learned in the few years spent at school. Only in the 1960s did Italian education come to include more people. Until the 1950s, school was one of the few places where standard Italian - not generally used for everyday interactions - was not only taught but also spoken. As a consequence, only educated people could know Italian. As already noted, this situation has changed due to the birth of the national television and to a change in the attitudes towards dialects. Thus, only after the Second World War did the constant use of dialect slowly start to decline, especially in the northern regions and among the higher social classes (De Mauro, 2011). However, as said before, migrants usually came from the south of Italy and they belonged to the poorest classes (De Mauro, 2011). As Haller suggests, "while the use of dialects in Italy was gradually limited to home and family, or abandoned in favour of the standard language, the local dialects remained for decades the only form of speech among Italian emigrant communities" (1987: 393). Thus, standard Italian would usually be the migrants' L2, while their local dialect was their L1, their mother tongue.

On the contrary, Italian is definitely the L1 of most of the post-2008 crisis migrants, or at the very least, Italian is a language they can speak fluently. In 2012, 91.3% of the Italian population aged between 18-74 said Italian was their exclusive mother tongue (Istat, 2014). Since the institute for statistics only asks about "named languages" (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015), people affirmed they use Italian, although, in reality, they probably speak a regional variety of Italian (Cerruti, 2011). This allows for smooth conversations between people coming from all regions of Italy, while this was not always possible for post-war migrants. The fact that new

Italian migrants can understand, and that they are speakers of their national language, represents a significant difference between old and new migrants and it is also symbolic of the linguistic processes which have taken place in the homeland. Nevertheless, my study indicates that, despite this preference for Italian, dialects still occupy an important role in the linguistic repertoire of many post-2008 crisis migrants. Dialects are part of their heritage and the migrants do not hesitate to use them with other speakers coming from the same region or the same geographical area (north, centre, or south). This emerged not only from the interviews carried out with the participants of this project (see section 5.5.) and from the spontaneous recordings (see Chapter 4 for an explanation of the data collection methods), but also from my informal observation of several contexts wherein migrants with the same regional origin engaged in conversations. Due to ethical reasons, I was not allowed to record the project's participants in their workplaces. However, when possible, I observed them in different contexts and took notes on their linguistic profiles and behaviour (see sub-section 4.3.1.4.) and discussed this with them during their interviews.

Undoubtedly, new migrants consider the Italian language a source of pride. In the past, Italian migrants seemed keen to abandon their mother tongue ('tongues' in the case of dialects) because that type of language was connected to their past life that was often characterised by misery. As Dal Negro and Vietti (2011) explain, in Italy, dialect was stigmatised more than today in the 1970s and in the 1980s when parents adopted a monolingual policy with their children by using only Italian. Reflecting on the language of Italian-Americans, Carnevale (2006) explains that, while today in Italy dialect can be seen as a cultural, folkloristic element, for migrants living in the USA, dialect has a different symbolic meaning. She writes: "their dialect associated them with "*la miseria*," the endemic poverty of the South and the daily exertions required for subsistence" (2006: 100). Dialects were considered as non-prestigious languages which signalled the ignorance of the speakers who used them (De Fina, 2007a; 2007b), despite being the L1 of most of the past migrants in the USA, in the UK and in Australia. One of De Fina's participants says:

10. "L: *ma nu pover analfabet com me come posso saper*?" (De Fina, 2007a: 69).

(Translation: "L: but a poor illiterate like me how would I know?").

The speaker wants to claim his ignorance, saving face, because he does not know the Italian words for cooking ingredients. To strengthen his claim, he opts for a dialectal choice. He later adds that his Italian is "abruzzese 1938" (De Fina, 2007a: 69). 'Abruzzese' is a type

of Italian dialect, and, by adding that date, the participant also shows awareness of speaking an old-fashioned form of this dialect. The important point is that ignorance is automatically associated with the use of dialect. According to De Fina, the use of dialect is a resource for this speaker who can switch from his usual identity to “a locally occasioned identity as an incompetent” (2007a: 70). The link between dialectal usage and ignorance is only exemplified here, but the literature on the language of Italian migrants is in agreement on this association (Carnevale, 2006; Gabaccia, 2013; Haller, 1987; Rubino, 2014a). For this reason, we can say that dialectal features have certain indexical meanings (Johnstone *et al.*, 2006; Silverstein, 2003), and that the use of some dialectal variants, even in a contact situation, can link the speakers to a specific historical or socio-cultural context.

### 2.6. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to highlight the historical context of the present project. In this way I was able to define the sociological and linguistic differences and similarities between the previous and the contemporary waves of Italian migrants in the UK. This chapter started with an overview of the history of Italian migration with a focus on the UK and London. This section explains the migratory tradition post-crisis migrants continue. The chapter then presents examples of past migrants’ multilingual practices. The relevance of the discussion of such instances will be better understood with the analysis of the data. In addition, by critically reviewing the sociological literature of the last decade on the post-crisis migrants, I highlighted a key element for my thesis. While so far scholars and the media have been prone to suggest a simplistic dichotomy between past and contemporary migrants, my thesis underscores the fragility of such antithesis. In order to provide a more detailed picture of this new wave, I list below the main features characterising this new generation of Italian migrants that is the subject of this thesis:

- Age: Most of the actors of this migration are young, being aged between 18 and 35 years old (Licata, 2015; Romei, 2017; Tintori and Romei, 2017; Vedovelli, 2015).

- Gender: The number of women and men seems balanced, although statistics on this specific aspect (in regard to the London context) have not been published yet.

- Family and chain of migration: Most new migrants leave Italy without any member of their family. The system of the migration chain is not as strong as it was in the past when

migrants going to the UK were hired in bulk directly in their hometowns. However, support and help are often sought on Facebook groups and forums (Marino, 2015; Seganti, 2010).

- Time of and reasons for migration: The 2007-2008 economic crisis triggered the present European migration (King, 2017). However, in the Italian case, and due to the Italian socio-political situation, the peak of migration was reached in 2013-2015 (Tintori and Romei, 2017) and it has been continuing despite an overall economic recovery (Romei, 2017). Generally, the literature on the topic agrees on the separation of the two phases. Immediately after the crisis, mostly highly-educated young people migrated, whereas, in the last years, the wave has also been formed of semi-educated and semi-(professionally) skilled people (Gjrgji, 2015; Sanfilippo, 2017). Despite some scholars mention it, this element is never stressed although it seems to be a very important aspect to better understand the multifaceted structure of the post-crisis wave. On the other hand, the reasons for migrating highlighted by the members of the first and of the second phase coincide. The economic situation of the homeland has surely contributed to the reignition of this phenomenon. However, the young Italians living in London and the studies on the topic denounce an endemic crisis which characterises Italian society and its cultural setting (Sanfilippo, 2017). This is then translated into a disbelief in the ability of the state to manage the life of its citizens and into a critique of the Italian socio-political system (Conti, 2012). The situation was only aggravated by the economic crisis, which prompted the mass migration.

- Profession: The educational dichotomy is reflected in the professional picture of the new wave, suggesting a white collar/blue collar division. However, a clarification is necessary. Certainly, many post-crisis migrants work in the business and financial sectors, and in office jobs (Conti, 2012; King *et al*., 2014; 2016). In particular, the new migrants are employed in sectors connected with the artistic and commercial value of Italian products (e.g., architecture, fashion, Made in Italy). As McKay (2015) suggests, however, Italian migrants mostly work in the hospitality sector. This is due to a series of factors. Firstly, the relation of Italians to their cuisine and the business exploitation of it is historically acknowledged in London (Sponza, 2005) and the new Italian migrants are prone to continuing such a connection. Secondly, due to the value of Italian food, there is a large number of Italian restaurants in London such that even people with a low knowledge of English can be employed. Thirdly, since the migration to London has re-started, Italians have started new businesses. Not only restaurants and Italian shops, but also street food vendors are now selling Italian food and, thus, employing Italian migrants (Wall, 2016). It is important to specify that not only do uneducated people work in

the hospitality sector, but also highly educated migrants who do not have the appropriate knowledge of the English language necessary to work in other sectors (McKay, 2015).

- Linguistic repertoire: The new Italian migrants mainly speak regionalised varieties of neo-standard Italian (Berruto, 1987). They sometimes shift to their hometown's dialect for metaphorical purposes. These shifts are generally limited to friendly and intimate situations or in cases where the speakers involved in the speech event share a common regional origin.

From the literature review and from the features listed above, it emerges that, at a general level, the main difference between past and present migrants is the absence, in the post-2008 crisis wave, of homogeneity. The general characteristics that I have summarised here only partially cover the reality of the new wave. This firmly contrasts with the image of the communities investigated in the previous linguistic Italian migration studies. Therefore, if for recent scholars a qualitative interactionist approach was a choice, conforming to the contemporary linguistic trend (see section 4.2. for references), for the present case it was obligatory. The focus on language and identity adopted by many other scholars to investigate Italian migrants' conversational episodes offers, in this case, the possibility of discussing the different types of individuals present in the post-2008 crisis flow. It offers the opportunity to comprehend the variety characterising the contemporary migration, and, analytically and methodologically, it sets up a challenging task. The object of this investigation is not the identity of the community, challenged by the members themselves. Conversely, it is the work on identity that is done by the participants involved in the project and that emerges from their discourses and narratives through the exploitation of multilingual practices. The next chapter is, thus, firstly dedicated to the most relevant literature on the relation between linguistic practices and the negotiation and display of identities. In the second part of the chapter, I present the literature regarding the main multilingual practices new migrants engage with and the most current debates on these.

# Chapter 3. Multilingual practices and the display of identities

## 3. Introduction

The previous chapter concluded with the presentation of the new Italian migrants, the participants of the present research. In the conclusion, I introduced the angle chosen to investigate the linguistic practices of these new migrants: the connection between the production of multilingual practices and their application in the construction, and consequent display, of new identities. This chapter presents the literature that my data analysis is based on, dealing with the most relevant debates on the negotiation of identities in conversational episodes and in narratives (sections 3.1. and 3.2.). Several studies have highlighted the connection between language and identity. More specifically, the study of the display and the construction of identity through communicational practices and interactions has become very popular in the last three decades (see, among others, Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998; Bucholtz and Hall, 2005; De Fina, 2007a; 2007b; 2007c; 2015a; 2015b; De Fina *et al.*, 2006; Giampapa, 2001; 2007; Fellin, 2007; Pasquandrea, 2008; Rubino, 2014a; 2015). My thesis inserts in this tradition, by showing how a sample of new Italian migrants exploit their multilingual resources to display, negotiate and challenge their identities. For this reason, section 3.1. opens with a general overview of the theories that explain the role of language in the construction and display of identity. Subsequently, studies more specifically connected with the present research are reviewed in order to shed light, firstly, on the notion of *plural identities* and, secondly, on individuals' ability to negotiate such identities through *languaging* practices (Li Wei, 2011). As we will understand, it is important to stress the attention on the plurality of identities the studied speakers are prone not only to show, but also to discuss and question (section 5.3., 5.4., 5.5.). As Giampapa explains, the investigation of language in interactions allows us to believe that "language practices reflect the multiple positions that speakers hold" (2001: 280). This connection between speakers' positions and language practices represents the core of this section. Since one of the aims of the present research is to identify the new identities negotiated by the new wave of Italian migrants, and to analyse the language practices by means of which identities are constructed, in this section I provide the theoretical explanations necessary to understand the subsequent analysis of the data collected. In sections 3.3. and 3.4., the notions of *grouping*, *affiliation* and *other/othering* are explored, since these are key elements which relate with the negotiation and re-construction of new migratory identities, as I will show in section 5.2. and 5.6 of the data analysis chapter. Sub-section 3.3.2. is pivotal for this thesis since a discussion on the understanding of *late modern community* is presented there. By framing the post-2008 crisis

wave in late modernity, we can better comprehend the new migrants' perception of the community itself. With the data presented in section 5.2., we will understand why I framed this community in these terms. The chapter concludes with the presentation of the notion of *transnational identities* and its link with *translanguaging*, two concepts extremely significant for understanding the linguistic practices of twenty-first century migrants (sections 3.5. and 3.6.). Translanguaging is a relatively recent conceptualisation of language contact (Mazzaferro, 2018) and I therefore shed light on this new approach by presenting an overview of recent literature in relation to the earlier dominating debates on language contact phenomena (subsection 3.6.1.).

### 3.1. The constructionist approach

The present research, taking a late modern perspective, is based on an anti-essentialist and social-constructivist view. In addition, the research is carried out under the post-positivistic research paradigm, which "assumes there are many ways of knowing *aside* from using the scientific method. Rather than testing hypothesis, post-positivistic research generates hypotheses through inductive reasoning" (McGregor and Murnane, 2010: 422). Anti-essentialism refuses to see individuals as fixed units, carrying one essence that defines their entire being (Grillo, 1995). If, in the past, individuals were considered to be "characterised by coherence, rationality and continuity", now the self is seen as "fragmented, multivocal, discontinuous, and contradictory" (De Fina, 2016b: 168-169). Hence, the shift from a singular idea of identity to a plural one. As De Fina points out, individuals have access to vast "inventories of identities" which they can display (2016b: 169). In addition, she argues that, since identities are plural, they can also be "contradictory and polyphonic" (De Fina, 2017: 3), negotiated (De Fina, 2010), and expressed and performed at different times in the same discourse act. This approach perfectly suits the description of the multifaceted life experiences of late modern migrants, who are connected with multiple realities, contexts and other speakers situated in different countries and continents. Contemporary migrants represent the possibility of living within multiple cultures and languages at the same time, and because of this specific opportunity to be simultaneously one and many, they become interesting objects of study for constructionist scholars.

Over the past two decades, the literature has focused on the strategies that speakers adopt to construct their identities. The constructionist perspective sees identities as constructs built in interactions and through social practices (De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg, 2006). Subsequently, discourse practices are understood as core social practices (Fairclough, 1989). For the scholars, the link between social practices, seen as spaces where identities are constructed, and

discourse practices, interpreted as one form of social practice, justifies the study of language as a vehicle for the display of identities. De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg maintain that social constructionism interprets identities as a process, happening in "concrete and specific" interactions and which "results from processes of negotiation" (2006: 2-3), and this offers an analytical model for new emerging identities. As we see in this chapter, the study of identity construction in talk has a long history. For the Italian case, while previous migration studies of identity construction in discourse practices usually involved families and therefore different generations of migrants (Cavallaro, 2006; Ciliberti, 2007; De Fina, 2007c; 2012; Di Salvo, 2014; 2015; Fellin, 2007; Palumbo, 2013; Panese, 1992; Pasquandrea, 2008; Rubino, 2014a; 2014b; 2015), the present study focuses on the construction of identities in conversations involving only first-generation migrants. For *first-generation migrants*, I mean people who were born in Italy and moved to the UK to work, regardless of their intention to settle or to remain in London for a short or long period. The refusal of traditional migratory social practices where social identities could be nourished makes these discourse practices even more important for the participants, as conversations become the only place where new identities are created and displayed. This analysis is illustrated in more detail in Chapter 5, section 5.2.

If individuals build and negotiate their identities in social moments, this inherently implies that identity cannot be a monolithic construct, and that every interactional situation may yield various plural identities at the disposal of or created by individuals. At this point and before we proceed, a terminological clarification seems necessary. From now on, I use the terms *individuals* and *speakers* indiscriminately, since the suggested analysis implies that individuals engage in language practices and discourse interactions. Through this terminological choice, I aim to reinforce the idea that the discourse practices of the participants in this project are the meaningful core of my investigation in terms of identity negotiation goals. Agreeing with De Fina and Georgakopoulou, I consider narratives and participants' communicative exchanges, collected through spontaneous recordings and interviews, "as social practice" (2008: 379), where *social identities* (notion explained in 3.2.2.) can be negotiated and performed.

### 3.2. Indexicality, performance, and social identities

In the paragraph above, I introduced a key verb: *perform*. The constructionist approach not only sees identity as a process, but it also points out the idea of a *performance* (De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg, 2006). Identities can be performed according to the specific needs and aims of the individuals participating in a given interaction. Goffman (1959) was the first to theorise "the performative aspects of identity" (Huot and Rudman, 2010: 72), and, thus, to

interpret individuals' behaviour and ways of interacting with others as performances of identities. According to Goffman (1959), in interactions, the self finds the opportunity to perform. It follows, then, that the choice of performing one identity instead of another is linked with and influenced by several elements characterising the discourse event. To explain speakers' selection of identity, scholars developed the concept of indexicality. Bucholtz and Hall introduce the "indexicality principle" (2005: 593) among five principles they consider pivotal for the study of identity: the principles of "emergence" (2005: 587), "relationality" (2005: 598), "partialness" (2005: 605), and "positionality" (2005: 591) (further addressed in section 3.4.). All these principles are fundamental to understanding speakers' choices concerning identity displays in interactional contexts. Nevertheless, I will only address those relevant for my analysis.

### 3.2.1. Indexicality

Among the five principles listed above, the *indexicality principle* is the most relevant for my analysis. It is based on the notion of the *index*, which is a "linguistic form that depends on the interactional context for its meaning" (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 594). The notion of *indexicality* implies the creation of connections between linguistic forms, realised by the speakers in interactions to construct their identities, and socio-cultural values and social meanings. In discussing indexicality, we cannot avoid the notion of "orders of indexicality" (Silverstein, 2003). The scale of indexical orders explains how linguistic features go from being unnoticed and used by a socio-demographically defined group of speakers to being understood as stereotypical identifiers of that group. As Johnstone *et al.* (2006) illustrate, orders of indexicality help us to trace how:

> "first-order" correlations between demographic identities and linguistic usages (Labov's 1972b, 178, "indicators") came to be available for "second-order" sociolinguistic "marking" (Labov, 1972b, 179) of class and place. (2006: 78)

Moreover, this scale shows how, when features reach the "third-order" (Johnstone *et al.*, 2006: 78) they then operate as stereotypical elements in "more reflexive identity work" (Johnstone *et al.*, 2006: 78). This theoretical framework is centred on the idea that languages are socio-cultural constructs of groups of speakers, and the process of language development is then interpreted as bidirectional, since the process of language construction "also constructs the group itself" (Johnstone *et al.*, 2006: 79). Johnstone *et al.* used the notion of indexical orders to show the path of linguistic features characterising the linguistic practices of working-class people living in Pittsburgh in the USA. For these scholars, those features went from being unnoticed by the users (the first-order of indexicality) to being regional features "available for

social work" with meanings "shaped mainly by ideologies" (the second-order of indexicality) (Johnstone *et al.*, 2006: 82). They then finally become elements to align or misalign with a local identity (the third-order of indexicality). Indexical orders have also been applied to the study of multilingual practices. For instance, Leimgruber (2012) suggests that, in Singaporeans' speech, shifting in different languages has an indexical meaning. Therefore, language mixing, or the insertion of borrowings, can convey metapragmatic and social meanings in a second-order indexicality understanding, and conventionally recognised meanings on a third-order indexicality interpretation. The assumption behind this theorisation is that ideologies and everyday individuals' perceptions regarding sets of linguistic variants produce indexical associations, and, consequently, speakers can choose to adhere to a linguistic style in cases they want to be associated with a socio-cultural category, or they can choose to reject that style if they wish to disaffiliate. These processes are exemplified in sub-section 5.5.1, where I discuss new Italian migrants' understanding of their multilingual practices in relation to Italian migration history and migratory style. It is important to mention at this point that the term *style* is here used to indicate *social style*. Style is interpreted as a cultural result and expression of groups' social identities (Keim, 2007). For the present research, indexicality is deployed at two levels. Firstly, the linguistic behaviour of past migrants, described in section 2.4., can be seen as indexical of a set of elements that are ideologically informed (the second-order of indexicality). Secondly, new migrants decide to align with or to reject the association with such a style - understood as their new way of talking, deploying all the linguistic resources at their disposal - or to renegotiate such linguistic behaviour in order to present themselves as modern migrants (the third-order of indexicality). In the data analysis chapter, I show examples of what we could interpret as third-order of indexicality, as I aim to highlight the connection between indexicality and identity negotiation processes.

Bucholtz and Hall maintain that "the use of linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personas and groups" (2005: 594) is an indexical process yielding identity relations that develop from interactions. The terms *group* and *personas* lead us towards another noteworthy theoretical element: *social identities*. By introducing the idea of *performance*, I have, in a sense, jumped ahead to the end of the constructionist process and so the reader may now wonder which identities can be constructed and how they are shaped. The literature on the topic explains this step through the clarification of the concept of *social identity*. By reviewing Erikson (1968), Huot and Rudman (2010) mention three levels of identity: social, personal and ego identity. As they explain, "social identity reflects one's location

within the social structure" (Huot and Rudman, 2010: 69). Some elements of social identity are naturally intrinsic and not modifiable (i.e., ethnicity and age). However, other social identifications can be earned, constructed and acquired due to changes in individuals' statuses or conditions. This aspect gains relevance since one acquires a determined social identity, and this will affect individuals' personal identity, their views and how other people perceive them. Since individuals are builders and performers of identities, and always being positioned in a social context, it is clear that the identities constructed are influenced by and related to socio-cultural factors. The speakers, thus, become social actors performing roles, and these roles are built according to the social and cultural environment in which such performance happens. Therefore, *social identities* are the identities which are permeated by the need of the self to be included in social contexts in order to exist (Edwards, 1998).

### 3.2.2. Social identities and grouping

Linguists have developed social-psychological theories regarding social identities by focusing closely on the communicative interaction of individuals. According to them, interaction is the place where social identities are negotiated and built, and manifestly performed (Auer, 2007). Auer (2007: 3) highlights the connection between social identity and interaction by claiming that "social personae" and "social-communicative practices" are deeply interconnected, and by adding that social identity is not always an *a priori* label, but that individuals establish a relation with their social identity through linguistic choices. Auer (2007), like many other scholars (Bailey, 2001; 2002; 2007; Coupland, 2007; Deppermann, 2007; Gunthner, 2007; Woolard, 2007), begins with Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's notion of "acts of identity" (1985). Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's framework is closely related to the idea of performativity. However, while Goffman's idea of identity performance recalls a broader process (since identity can be performed through different means not exclusively communicatively interactionally), Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (2006) analyse such "acts of identity" exclusively within a linguistic frame. Speakers are thus seen as socio-stylistic decision-makers. For Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (2006), this interpretation of speakers' linguistic practices is an attempt to reconcile two different meanings of the concept of identity. According to them, the first meaning recalls idiosyncratic individual choices regarding the person speakers want to be or can be, and the categories they want to fit into. The second meaning identifies the individual as a small part of a larger entity, and, thus, it introduces the knowledge of belonging. As we will see in Chapter 5, the project's participants perform "acts of identity" at an individual level, creating new identities and renogatiaing those socio-culturally imposed, through linguistic

practices. The same linguistic practices then allow them to decide boundaries and membership. The linguistic practices of these migrants show that "individual's idiosyncratic behaviour reflects attitudes towards groups, causes, [and] traditions" (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 2006: 2).

Still reviewing Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's work, Auer (2007) provides a rationale guiding individuals' choices. Speakers wish to conform to the behaviour of social groups that they want to be affiliated with and this drives their decisions. Moreover, such an affiliation is achieved and explicitly displayed through the appropriate use of linguistic tools. Therefore, speakers perform acts of identity through language to show their membership to one specific category (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 2006). Crucially, Auer (2007) adds one element that is vital for the analysis and the understanding of the data collected for the present research. Auer argues that Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's framework is incomplete since they only mention affiliation, and they discard disaffiliation. However, by not conforming to social groups' linguistic choices, speakers can express their desire to not be associated with such groups. Otherwise, by using different linguistic realisations, they can reshape the boundaries of a preconceived social group.

Belonging, showing affiliation (and disaffiliation), and grouping are natural practices intrinsic in the behaviour of human beings. In his review of theories related to these topics, Auer (2007) introduces Antaki and Widdicombe's (1998) theoretical framework based on Sacks' 1992 lectures. In these lectures, Sacks addressed the division of humanity into categories, and he expounded the theories illustrating the way in which people use these categories to carry out routines and daily activities. Auer and his associates (2007) focus all their attention on processes of identity construction in terms of differencing and heterogeneity; they deal with the identification of multiple and diverse voices and the *othering* process, further explained below, and the constructionist perspective permeates their analyses. On the other hand, Antaki and Widdicombe, and their associates (1998), are more concerned with the relation between the individual and the conversational context (interpreted also as the others involved in the conversations) wherein the self stands and in which the self builds its identity. For this reason, the latter authors rely heavily on social identity theories (Hogg *et al.*, 1995). Both these approaches, however, provide valid support for the analytical reading of the data in this project.

### 3.3. Negotiating membership

Antaki and Widdicombe's work is crucial for the study of membership and grouping systems displayed through linguistic means during interactions. Antaki and Widdicombe's theory of *Membership Categorisation Analysis* is thoroughly connected with the process of identities' construction (a key element of the data presented in 5.3. and 5.4.), and it thus deserves a place in the present chapter. The scholars summarise their theory of social identity by positing five principles. In the first, they affirm that, for people to have identities, it means they are categorised, and that such categories show specific characteristics. The second refers to the description of categorising, i.e., categorisation as indexical and occasioned. As we note, indexicality governs group membership definition, as well as identity performance (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). The third principle explains that categorisation "makes relevant the identity" (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 3) to the communicative event happening. The fourth postulates that the identities to analyse should influence the studied interactions. The last principle regards people's "exploitation of the structures of conversation" (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 3). Since conversations are shaped by regular structures which respond to conversational expectations, we can see identity work done within the structure of talk-in interactions (Schegloff, 1987), and the relation between identity display and the fulfilment of these expectations.

As we see, those principles position *identity* in a close relation with categorisation and membership. It follows then that, according to these principles, and especially in terms of the first three, a discussion on identity cannot leave aside the position that the self holds in social contexts, and this position itself is the element determining the process of identity construction (McKinlay and Dunnett, 1998), as we will see in the analysis of the segments in sub-section 5.3.1., for instance. In addition, by reviewing the works of Antaki and Widdicombe and their associates (1998), we observe how social theories on identity (i.e., Tajfel [1982], Tajfel [2010], and Turner [1987]) are integrated into a linguistic perspective, acquiring an exclusive linguistic connotation when applied to procedures belonging to the conversation and discourse analytical approaches (Edwards, 1998). Therefore, we understand social identities and individuals' relations with such identities not only by comprehending the relation that the self has with the social groups they are supposed to belong to, but also by examining conversations and communicative events in which these processes happen. For those scholars, interactions are not just the places where identities are displayed but they also provide empirical evidence of the identity-construction process. I show examples of this process in section 5.3. and 5.4.

For the present research, one aspect of this process is paramount. As McKinlay and Dunnett maintain, "social categories are objective phenomena" (1998: 47), being unrelated to interactions; conversely, self-categorisation (i.e., an individual's wish to be associated or disaffiliated with one category) is observable in speakers' interactional episodes. McKinlay and Dunnett explain this with an example. They suggest imagining a man, a member of the Labour Party, and a supporter of the Glasgow Rangers football team. Afterwards, they invite us to picture him at a "women's feminist discussion group" (1998: 47), at a Conservative Party meeting and then at a gathering of supporters of the rival football team. It seems obvious to suppose an alteration of behaviour, according to the different contexts that this man finds himself in and the different self-categorisations that he wants to show. Such self-categorisation is then expressed, and, therefore, can be analysed, in his social interactions. I also provide an example from my research to illustrate this notion. Consider the social category of *migrants*. To comprehend it, or to determine its existence, we would not need a given interaction. To become a migrant, one only needs to leave their country. Then, we could argue that the word *migrant* is connoted by differences of nuances. We could subsequently claim that the meaning of this category can be negotiated in interactions and the characteristics determining it are negotiated through individuals' discourses. For instance, new Italian migrants could decide to present themselves, and thus self-categorise, as traditional migrants. For *traditional migrants* I mean migrants who left Italy due to difficult economic conditions to search for a livelihood that was difficult to obtain in the homeland. On the contrary, in other circumstances, these migrants could decide to present themselves, through the means of discourse interactions, as mobile people who came to London to acquire new professional knowledge, and, hence, revisit the objectively known social category of migrant (see for instance sub-section 5.2.3.).

For McKinlay and Dunnett (1998), the conversation analytic approach is decisive in comprehending individuals' self-categorisation, since speakers' choices regarding the agreement with pre-determined social categories are expressed through interaction turns and communicative practices, as we will also see in 5.4.

The process of self-categorisation in interactions is related to the notion of indexicality, since speakers might choose indices to implicitly claim their membership to a category or a group. Indices, as Jones (2014) expounds, can point out one's membership to a precisely connoted cultural category, and I would add, a social one, as well. Categorisation hence leads to membership. If one agrees with a category at their disposal, the membership process starts. Although these two concepts are closely interconnected, we must highlight that categorisation

may be imposed from above (Anderson, 2016), while membership, most of the time, is voluntarily avowed, particularly if we read this from an anti-essentialist perspective (Grillo, 1995). In addition, if we can understand and analyse speakers' acceptance of social categories, we can evaluate their attitudes towards the processes of grouping and consequent membership, as we can understand from section 5.2. The self-categorisation framework perfectly allows for multiple identities and identity negotiations, and it has been adopted in several constructionist studies because affiliation is not crystallised. Speakers can avow membership in some contexts, thus adopting indexical linguistic features relevant for one identity linked to the membership in question, while rejecting this same affiliation once the context has changed. An example of this is offered by Podesva (2007). A gay man, who uses a falsetto voice among homosexual friends to show his 'diva' persona and, thus, his affiliation to a specifically connoted category, was found to be perfectly able to switch his voice, acquiring a new one to be used, for instance, in a workplace environment. However, it is clear that the categories in which an individual can fit are not unlimited but, nevertheless, the range of choices is surely very wide. Undeniably, choices are strongly influenced by external unchangeable factors or by topicality, and these determine the actual performances of individuals' identities.

### 3.3.1. Traditional categories and the challenge of above-imposed categorisation

The categories at the disposal of the individual are generally already crystallised and predetermined. The freedom of the individual seems to be guaranteed by the possibility of choosing their social identities, and the means of performing them. However, although this framework allows for shifts in identity according to the situation, it cannot ignore the fact that one's belonging to a group implies an agreement with the characteristic features of this group (Widdicombe, 1998). Membership is thus linked to (social) implications and these implications set the rules for group behaviour. Widdicome explains that "membership categories also are loci for the legitimate […] imputation of motives, expectations and rights associated with the category and its members" (1998: 53). Therefore, if we ignore individuals' intimate processes of membership, categorisation acceptance, and negotiation of their belonging, we run the risk of assuming individuals' compliance with the category's features. Ignoring the perspective of the social actors involved in the dynamics of membership negotiation and acceptance would thus entail the applications of labels that lack concreteness, or that, perhaps, are too concrete for the shifting and contingent nature of identity construction, as I show in 5.2. Moreover, we must bear in mind that the social actors experiencing categorisation, for instance, can sometimes challenge categories themselves, and the set of expectations and implications attached to

them. Similarly, the performances of identities can be traditionally accomplished, although this does not exclude the re-negotiation of the obligations deriving from such forms of performativity (Widdicome, 1998), as exemplified in 5.2.2.

To clarify what was theorised above, I will explain the case of the present research. The participants are all migrants observed during in-group gatherings. The factor distinguishing these informants from a young person who has remained in Italy is the experience of migration. Therefore, the new salient social identity that these speakers negotiate is likely to involve their newly acquired status as migrants, and in particular that of Italian migrants in London. Participants themselves claim that, owing to their nationality and the migration, they are naturally seen as members of the Italian London community. However, they do not conceptualise themselves in this way, we cannot discard other membership options. Moreover, this new status does not stand in isolation, but it brings along with it nuances and sub-categories. *Migrant* is a social identity that, for the people of a country like Italy with a long tradition of emigration and of studies on it, immediately evokes implications, and traditional norms of performativity. Just considering the case of London, Fortier (1999; 2006) investigates all the traditional activities of the post-Second World War Italian community settled in Clerkenwell by adopting perfomativity as a theoretical framework. She thus reads every gesture as an explicit symbol of belonging to a community, performed according to the traditional canons of the group. Those migrants' social identity is presented through their performative acts; performative acts which had the purpose of levelling the identities of the individuals, who fulfil their performative tasks in an attempt to display loyalty to the migratory status and as proof of membership (Fortier, 1999). These practices are the core places where social identities were nourished. This, obviously, does not happen exclusively in historical Italian communities abroad, but in many other migratory circumstances too. Canagarajah (2012), for instance, describes how the offspring of Sri Lankan Tamil migrants living in Canada, in the USA, and in the UK, are able to perform their worship gestures during religious rituals despite not being able to understand and speak Tamil. This is reported as an example of community practices, perpetuated in order to reinforce the identity of a second generation of migrants (Canagarajah, 2012). On the other hand, Blackledge *et al.* (2008) showed that identities imposed by the insitutions of traditional communities (such as complementary Bangladeshi schools) can be contested by second and third generation migrants through multilingual practices which can reverse speakers' subjugate positions. Either traditional or subversive socio-cultural linguistic performances structure the identity of a com-

munity, and consequently of its members. As De Fina (2007a; 2007b) suggests, not only institutional places granted the possibility to strengthen the identity of Italian traditional migrants, but also religious and leisure activities acted as identity-construction spaces.

Conversely, new Italian migrants challenge these forms of grouping. Scotto (2015a; 2015b), Conti (2012) and Sacco (2013) emphasise that new Italian migrants do not involve themselves with the practices promoted by the historical Italian community in London. These scholars maintain that, on the contrary, their informants are keen to engage with other Europeans on the basis of a common background and of commonality of experience. Moreover, according to those scholars, Italians who moved to London challenged their status as migrants, rejecting this highly traditional way of labelling, and preferring to be addressed as mobile people. The sociological behaviour of this project's participants, who agreed with the feelings and the opinions of the informants interviewed by the scholars above, can be analysed on the basis of "self-categorisation theory" (Turner, 1987, in Edwards, 1998). Self-categorisation theory addresses the desire of people to be classified, or not classified, according to their wishes, and not on the basis of the categories imposed by collective imagination, observers and researchers (Hogg *et al*., 1995). However, I would argue that, in terms of identity and categorisation challenges, the case of the new Italian migrants deserves a partial revision. The conclusions obtained by the above-mentioned scholars (Conti, 2012; Sacco, 2013; Scotto, 2015a; 2015b) are exclusively the direct result of the first phase of Italian post-2008 crisis migration. We must remember that the 2012 expansion of the migratory wave (Tintori and Romei, 2017) meant the inclusion of migrants having extremely different backgrounds in this new group and who present various socio-cultural profiles that differ from those included in Conti's (2012), Sacco's (2013) and Scotto's (2015a; 2015b) investigations. The profile of those who migrated due to economic reasons seems to be extremely far removed from those interviewed by these scholars, and, for this reason, I investigated this aspect further. I will show in section 5.2. that this differentiation has consequences. I will only anticipate that the diversity of the wave, caused by its enlargement, can, possibly, be one of the reasons for the participants' challenge to the existence of a tight-knit Italian community in London. To be more precise, the challenge to the traditional understanding of *Italian community* is a common pattern, regardless of the background of the migrants. On the contrary, new aspects of the migratory status emerged from my informants' interviews and this generated a need for new theoretical support to analyse and understand their responses.

The necessity of re-negotiating the traditionally understood status of migrant, through the re-establishment of diverse community practices, through community strategies of grouping, and, most importantly, through community linguistic behaviour, entails a reflection on the concept of *community*. To explain the meanings of this concept in the present case (see section 5.2. for examples of what theorised here), I rely on a distinction elaborated in a different area of research: gender and sexuality language studies. Discussing the existence of a gay community, Jones maintains that this label "is often used to refer to something which is imagined rather than rooted in physical reality" (2014: 3). Jones' claim develops from Anderson's (2016) theory of *imagined communities*, which are communities generated and permeated by media representations and constructions of homogeneous identities. Although Anderson (2016) applies his theorisation to the expounding of nationalism, and to how this then informs many aspects characterising the management of nations, his idea of imagined community suits different areas of investigation, as Jones (2014) has demonstrated. According to Jones, there is thus an imagined gay community and then grass-rooted communities of practice where queer identities are negotiated. In agreement with the data collected and discussed in sub-section 5.2.1., I would suggest that, similarly, we understand the notion of the *Italian community* as an imagined community, but, then, we must acknowledge the existence of smaller groups of migrants physically situated in specific realities. Applying this perspective, we can keep the concept of community as an abstract entity that the new migrants have to deal with. On a more concrete level, on the other hand, grouping is structured and organised differently. With the new Italian migrants being spread throughout the London territory and not grouped into one neighbourhood, the idea of dispersion and of the absence of physical engagement with many other members of the community recalls perfectly, mutatis mutandis, the notion of the *gay community*.

Just as the members in Jones' research were not arguing against their homosexual identity, the new Italian migrants involved in the present project do not challenge their Italian origin, but they do challenge the understanding and expression of *Italianness* and the concept of *Italian community in London* (see sub-section 5.2.2. for examples that justify this argument). They refuse the traditional mechanisms of grouping and the implications that this membership could have. Moreover, they challenge the a priori labelling and the characteristics imposed - top-down - by traditional criteria of investigation (see sub-section 5.2.3. for instances of this). In fact, we observe the agreement on widespread multilingual practices, while the participants deny any agreement and homogeneity at a sociological level. Hence, we can observe a change

in the attitude of the new wave of Italian migrants. Those interviewed by Scotto (2015a) were prone to grouping because they presented a socio-cultural homogeneous grouping, and, therefore, their only contrast with traditionally connoted Italianness was evident in their distance from previous generations of migrants. Conti's informants, on the contrary, stated their distance from Italy because they felt different from the standard Italian mindset, thus disaffiliating from commonly interpreted Italianness. As we will come to understand through the analysis of the data, the new Italian wave is so fragmented and multifaceted that uncovering a community feeling seems impossible, and this leads to the challenge of the existence of the community. Engaging with the explanation of Block (2006), we see that a community is not only an aggregate of people of a "certain national origin, racial phenotype, or religious affiliation" (Block, 2006: 24), but also a whole grouped together because of a common feeling. Therefore, if community means a "metaphorical space in which people feel a sense of belonging to a collective and trust in their acceptance by that collective" (Block, 2006: 25), we can then understand the true challenge of the new Italian migrants. From a linguistic perspective this confrontation becomes relevant and coping with it signifies avoiding the above imposed theoretical and analytical frameworks that do not do justice to the perspective of the social actors involved in the investigation. Moreover, as I explain below, we must acknowledge a general change in the understanding of twenty-first century (ethnic and national) communities.

### 3.3.2. Belonging to a new non-community

Scholars concerned with the study of community and community language in the last decades, and especially those who focused on highly diverse contexts such as metropolitan cities, could not avoid noticing that the structure of communities and community members' perceptions about their own communities have changed (Li Wei and Zhu Hua, 2013a). The notion of community has deeply mutated in late modernity and this led me to theorise the idea of *non-community*, understood as an entity which traditionally would be described as a community, but which presents so many elements of novelty (in particular regarding the community members' interpretation of it) that this notion is almost reversed. Two main elements are identified as responsible for the change: globalisation and transnationalism. I address the notion of *transnationalism* in section 3.5., since it is a key sociological concept linked to linguistic practices characterising this project's participants, as shown in section 5.6. It is sufficient for now to clarify that transnationalism refers to migrants' connections with their homelands and other countries in their everyday practices. According to Li Wei and Zhu Hua (2013a), global-

isation and transnationalism have modified the relation between majority and minority societies through a re-assessment of hierarchies and relations among individuals. In addition, as Tsagarousianou (2004) maintains in her analysis of the contemporary notion of *diaspora*, these two elements have altered the perception of space. The understanding of *far* has changed, she claims, as new media transnationally connect members of a diaspora. Mobility, metaphorically and literally conceptualised, has increased, leading to an intense diversification of pre-existent migrant or diasporic communities and to the formation of recent communities with non-traditional structures (Li Wei and Zhu Hua, 2013a).

Mobility, then, was studied in relation to an increase in diversity (Blommaert, 2016; Vertovec, 2007). This element generates a series of structural transformations and consequent re-conceptualisations of firmly established notions. Recently, Li Wei (2018b) reflected on the appropriateness of the idea of *community language* in heterogeneous contexts. To begin his analysis, he points out a shift in the structure of communities. As Block (2006) had already mentioned (see the section above), in late modern communities, "unity of will" seems to be more relevant for their members than "physical closeness" (Li Wei, 2018b: 2). However, if the status of community relies on the will of individuals, communities become precarious, fluid and not strictly defined. While geographical space provided stability, firstly individuals may change and, secondly, in late modernity, are seekers of flexibility. As Li Wei claims, "under the cultural conditions of late modernity, individuals shift from one social position to another in a fluid manner" (2018b: 3). The term *late modernity* describes the contemporary world in terms of time and space. Late modernity theorists, as Giddens (1991; 1993), argue that modernity reached its peak, in a phase of global expansion, in which individual's personal life and global systems are entangled, and this caused the disembedding of time and space. Giddens see the contemporary era as an extension of modernity, with reflexivity permeating society and allowing for a negotiation of tradition. Uncertainty, individual freedom, and fluidity are key elements of late modernity that can greatly impact individuals' lives. As Li Wei explains, not even social institutions usually recognised as stable, such as families, need to stay within pre-determined boundaries. According to Li Wei, in late modernity even "families are not given but made" (2018b: 19); I quote and highlight this passage here, as it is crucial for the analysis of the migrants chosen for the present project, since, for instance, the participants refer to their Italian friends in London or their workplaces as their new families.

Members of late modern communities challenge the pre-determined criterion that supported the creation and stabilisation of communities, and this shift is interpreted by Li Wei as

a shift from "location-based communities" to "identity-based community" (2018b: 4). It becomes clear that those who investigate late modern communities cannot neglect the study of identity. In addition, researchers need to understand how individuals see their identity in relation to the communities they implicitly belong to, and how they renegotiate their membership, or, more precisely, memberships. In fact, in this framework, individuals do not need to affiliate to one single community. This multiple belonging is allowed for by the diverse types of relations established among members of the community. Focusing on relations, James *et al.* (2012) offer an interesting taxonomy. They mention three types of relations. Firstly, they introduce *grounded community relations* established among specific people in specific places. Then they describe *lifestyle community relations*, created in communities developed through shared ways of life or common interests. Finally, they propose the existence of *projected community relations*, those perceived in imagined communities (see the section above), for instance (James *et al.*, 2012). Individuals establish all kinds of relations and this leads to their belonging to different types of communities.

Li Wei (2018b) points out that this reconceptualisation of community requires a reconceptualisation of the notion of *community language*. As he claims, "individuals can simultaneously have several different community languages as they belong to several different communities" (2018b: 8). Therefore, we cannot describe one speaker's linguistic practices as stably linked to one precise affiliation with one specific community. Li Wei explains that "[c]ommunities can no longer be identified on ethnic, race, or class terms alone, and, as Interactional Sociolinguistics research has demonstrated, there is much more intra-personal linguistic variation than was once understood" (2018b: 12). He then adds an extremely relevant consideration. Arguing that, nowadays, we notice that even in the same social group, speakers are not introduced equally to the same linguistic forms and that power relations influence the possibility of accessing linguistic resources. As we see later on, this is particularly true in heterogeneous communities such as the one taken into consideration for the present thesis. Such a reconceptualisation favours the preference for qualitative studies which position the individuals and all their linguistic intra-variation at the centre of the analysis. In this way, it is possible to understand how speakers deploy their linguistic resources and deal with the complexity of their multiple belongings. As mentioned above, in the last two decades, many scholars have shown the relationship between language usages and grouping. Eckert's (2000b) take on this issue is the most relevant for the present research, as it leads us towards the next section. She theorised

that speakers' linguistic practices are useful to establish differences with the other, and, therefore, speakers group by demarcating their distance from the other. As we see in the following section, the identification of the other can stand as a community/group process but also as an individual process necessary to shape and perform one's identity in a specific interactional moment.

### 3.4. Positioning and the role of the *other*

It is thus evident that linguistic approaches allow for a better understanding of the mechanism of grouping and the re-shaping of the boundaries of the new group. As other scholars (De Fina *et al*., 2006) have already suggested, linguistic analysis can shed light not only on speakers' belonging to categories, but also on the construction and identification of the boundaries of such groups. Thus, through linguistic means, individuals position themselves and, by positioning, highlight the *other* that allows for the identification of the group. Positionality is explained in one of the principles theorised by Bucholtz and Hall (2005); this is fundamental to understanding identity construction and display processes. According to these scholars, positionality helps to shed light on the actual behaviour of the speakers, who do not conform, *a priori*, to macro-level forms of categorisation, but who prefer a more grass-rooted form of affiliation. Local identities thus emerge in interactions and illuminate the position acquired by the speakers, and their attitudes towards the world and the social context they are inserted into. In this process, to help the positioning of the self and to strengthen the locally connoted identities of the individuals, the presence of the *other* is fundamental.

The self, hence, acquires a social identity according to the existence of *the other* (Goffman, 1959). As Shiffrin explains, "other is a microcosmic representation of society; other/society and self are interdependent" (2006: 105). According to Shiffrin, the self learns to behave, socially and linguistically, through the expectations of the others. The identification of the other links to a discourse on identity since "identity is about the constant and ongoing positioning of individuals in interactions with others" (Burck, 2005: 29). Moreover, such a building process relies on the presence of others, being the nature of social practice intrinsically connoted by the existence of the self in relation to other individuals (Jaworski and Coupland, 2005). Consequently, we can understand the definition of identity that Bucholtz and Hall provide: "identity is the social positioning of self and other" (2005: 586).

However, Shiffrin (2006) focuses exclusively on an *other* that shapes the rules of behaviour of the self, and that, though being in opposition with the self, is still physically included

in the interaction. I would, however, extend the meaning of the *other* in order to identify it as an external ideal presence that shapes the boundaries of a group, and the normative behaviour of the group itself. To be precise: specific linguistic characteristics shape the behaviour of a group, and the *other* is not allowed to intervene in this set of practices. The challenge for new groups, and in particular for migratory groups, can thus be to establish the nature of the *other*, but, once identified, this can lead towards a clearer definition of the boundaries of the group. De Fina's (2006) analysis of narratives, through which social identity is constructed, is closer to my perspective on and theorisation of the dynamics of grouping in a new aggregation of individuals. As she maintains, migrations expand the possibilities for "contact with the other" (De Fina, 2006: 351). According to De Fina, the post-modern world produces an increase in the contact of different communities. This has then generated "a problematization of the concept of identity itself and an effort to understand the relationship between people's sense of membership in a community, the beliefs and social practices that define that sense of membership, and its expression and manifestation in social behaviour" (2006: 351). De Fina (2006) and De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2008) propose a methodological guide for the investigation of social identities and the identification of the *other* through the study of narratives. Through the stories of the informants of De Fina (2006), for instance, the host country, and thus the hosting society, immediately emerges as the *other* that determines the distance between the migrants and the mainstream culture.

### 3.4.1. The *other* in a multicultural city

In migration studies, we usually find an automatic identification of the other as the host society. As anticipated, this emerges, for instance, from the narratives of De Fina's Mexican participants who clearly identify the "gringos" (American people) in contrast with themselves (2006: 364). This way of *othering* is close to the distinction between *we* and *they* suggested by Gumperz (1982). Nevertheless, the geographical context wherein this research is situated offers an innovative perspective and theorisation regarding the identification of the other. We cannot ignore where the new Italian migration is happening if we want to understand the dynamics of grouping and othering. London is "the most linguistically diverse city in the world" (Burck, 2005: 1) and the most multicultural in Europe (Block, 2006). This means that many communities coexist and enter into contact. English, being the de facto official language of the UK, is the lingua franca of London, offering the opportunity for inter-community communication. However, the British cultural mainstream is influenced by the lifestyle of such a huge metropolis. Globalisation has surely affected the landscape of this city (Block, 2006), increasing, on

the one hand, the multiculturality of its population and, on the other, changing the meaning of the concept of *Britishness.* It is beyond the purpose of the present research to discuss the meaning of such a concept, which has been described as controversial by scholars (among others, Kumar, 2010). Britishness is simply used here as *national character*, although I acknowledge the indefinite and complex set of meanings this word evokes. However, the main point I need to highlight is that the British national character is weaker in a city like London, where ethnic mixing is so evident as to define the character of the city itself (Wessendorf, 2013). As Block highlights, thus, ethnicity becomes more of a criterion to establish an opposition with other communities rather than a tool to set the distance from the mainstream culture that is so weakly represented in many neighbourhoods of London.

### 3.4.2. An *other* far away in space and time

I would suggest that in multicultural contexts such as London, migration and communities' identification of the other cannot simply be interpreted by following a dualistic perspective. Moreover, the other can have an abstract nature or can be physically situated far from the grouping individuals. As we see in Chapter 5, throughout the narratives, the reflections elaborated in the spontaneous conversation, and in the interviews, we still have a traditional identification of the other as the mainstream British culture, although influenced by the London lifestyle. Nonetheless, and most importantly, we can also highlight three *others* more relevant for the construction of the group social and linguistic identity and for the understanding and delimitation of the boundaries of the new group. The parents and the older relatives, the peers who remained in Italy, and, to a certain extent, even the past migrants represent the differentiating *others* affecting the negotiation of new identities and the definition of the membership of the new group.

Although this group has only recently formed, and is still developing, and although I must leave aside for now analytical observations (further expanded in Chapter 5), I can anticipate that some characteristics, highlighted from the narratives and interactions collected, are indeed shaping the new wave. Interestingly, language appears to be helping this process more than sociological features are. Since these new migrants find themselves inserted into a migratory tradition, the characteristics of this new group derive from a need to challenge pre-existing assumptions about and features of the social identities Italian migrants are generally thought to display. Firstly, they must challenge traditional roles, inherited from the Italian migratory tradition and from Italian society and its mindset. Secondly, the migrants feel the need to challenge the traditional systems of grouping and of membership, mirroring a demand that seems

to be experienced at a more general level. As Coupland summarises, "people's memberships of 'communities' are increasingly complex, more contextualised, and less well predicted by socio-structural facts" (2003: 426). Thirdly, they experience a need to challenge the last century's image of *migratory status*. This entails a re-negotiation of the idea of transnationalism and of their display of transnational features through linguistic means. This analytical information is provided here since the challenges suggested by the participants have theoretical implications, which are set out in the paragraphs below.

Through the specific use of the linguistic means at their disposal, the members of the post-2008 crisis wave negotiate traditional roles generally studied in the migratory context (De Fina, 2012) and deal with the absence of crystallised personas (e.g., the mother, the grandparents, etc.). The intergenerational debate, which was restrained in Italy, finds an opportunity to become effective due to the migration. The language and the constructionist process deriving from the innovation of linguistic practices play a fundamental role in such intergeneration games of role-rewriting. Being a first generation of migrants allows the members of the wave to dictate the rules for language innovations, and to establish new criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of people in re-thought categories. Denying ethnicity, or nationality, as a grouping criterion, and denying the traditional practices that provided the sense of belonging to a community based on ethnicity, the new migrants are promoters of new, more concrete, ways of grouping. The Italian community is fragmented because new Italian migrants do not recognise this abstract institution as they prefer more grass-rooted experiences of socialising and networking, so that they constantly re-negotiate their social and individual identities. It is not easy to ignore the concept of *super-diversity* - introduced by Vertovec (2007) – for scholars who attempt to understand contemporary migrant community dynamics and the post-2008 crisis wave stands as a sample case to interpret, or re-interpret, and understand such concept. In Vertovec's words:

> It is not enough to see diversity only in terms of ethnicity, as is regularly the case both in social science and the wider public sphere. Such additional variables include differential immigration statuses and their concomitant entitlement and restrictions of rights, divergent labour markets experiences, discrete gender and age profiles, patterns of spatial distribution, and mixed local area responses by service providers and residents. (2007: 1025)

Vertovec applies this concept to a depiction of British society. Pushing the application of this notion further, we cannot ignore the fact that the Italian community, due to the re-start of the migration, and owing to the different phases of migration (immediately after 2008 and

after the two-year peak between 2013-2015), is presently characterised by super-diversity, and the new Italian emigration can be studied as a case study of intra-community super-diversity. As Vertovec (2007) highlights, super-diversity has implications which researchers should not neglect. An example should clarify this proposal. De Fina, describing the audience of a Latino radio programme broadcast in the USA, says: "[…] first-generation, recent and older, immigrants are more likely to be Spanish-only speakers or to have greater competence in Spanish than in English" (2013: 11). This description recalls uniformity and it shows a model of migration that does not apply to the Italian contemporary emigration since many new Italian migrants know well the host country language, English, even before migrating. This forces the researcher to look deeper into the differences in new migrant communities. Furthermore, focusing on the specific case presented in this research, we cannot ignore the fact that the members themselves, denying the existence of the community, actually provide a different, fragmented image of it.

### 3.5. Transnationalism

If we want to characterise the members of this group in terms of socio-cultural practices, we also need to explore their transnationalism. As we will see, transnationalism is a concept crucial to understanding the notion of translanguaging (explained later – section 3.6.), which is based on the idea that contemporary migrants live in different words at the same time and they feel the urgency to show such multifaceted belongings through multilingual practices. Without reviewing the literature on transnationalism, I would miss an important element which characterises the lives of post-crisis Italian migrants. As we will read in the extracts in sub-sections 5.2.2., 5.2.3., 5.3.1.1., 5.3.1.3., 5.5.1., and 5.6.1., the negotiation and display of transnational identities is fundamental for the participants in this project and transnationalism is deeply connected with their multilingual practices.

Many theories on migration have been re-thought in the last two decades due to the changes that have happened in migratory patterns and to the late modern world (Blommaert, 2010; Blommaert and Rampton, 2012). It is interesting to note the parallel between the evolution of the theories applied to depict and understand migrants and the linguistic conceptualisations of the migrant speaker. As mentioned, the literature on transnationalism (Levitt and Schiller, 2004; Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton, 1992a, 1992b; Vertovec, 2001) no longer presents migrants as individuals in one place, but as mobile people who connect different worlds. Similarly, monolingualism, at a community and individual level, is now considered as a purely linguistic invention to be discarded in favour of a more realistic approach that looks at the

fluidity of languages and linguistic repertoire. Canagarajah (2012) is the author of a valuable summary of this evolution. He writes: "we are compelled to move away from territorialized languages that are bound to one community or locality, and perceive language resources as mobile and constituting different identities in different contexts" (2012: 252). We immediately note the link between this perspective shift and the plurality of identities, which leads, according to Canagarajah (2012), to a revision of the meaning of ethnicity, as well as to a challenge to the concepts of ethnicity and languages characterised by monolithic ethnic associations. In his paper, he claims that, by refusing a top-down imposed ethnicity, contemporary migrants, and the offspring of past migrants, construct "mixed ethnicities" that can be "transient, situational, fluid, playful, and ironic" (2012: 254). To a certain degree, this analysis can be applied to the Italian case as well. However, we must push Canagarajah's claim a little further. If we only think in terms of ethnicity, we cannot rely on Canagarajah's point of view. In fact, the new Italian migrants do not question ethnicity *per se*. While older Italian migrants acquired their right to show their ethnicity with pride only many years after their initial migration (Pasquandrea, 2008) since Italy had compromised its reputation with its involvement in the war, contemporary Italian migrants seem keen to proudly claim and defend their ethnic origin. However, if we recognise the existence of an Italian migratory ethnicity, we see a suitable application of Canagarajah's ideas to the present case. The new Italian migrants, especially those with a profile that distances them from the previous generations of Italian migrants, can play with their migratory ethnicity, deciding to play the role of Italian migrants, as well as claiming their externalisation from it.

Moreover, new migrants have to negotiate their Italian ethnicity within super-diversity which challenges the existence of the notion of *univocal Italianness*, a uniform national character that defines Italian people (see 5.2.2.). The Italian national character, and the expression of it, has often been represented stereotypically. As explained in Chapter 2, the stereotypes of Italians abroad were often perpetuated by academic studies, revealing an agreement between the common knowledge and what was believed to be the reality of the facts. Although I am forced to rely on the homogeneous image provided by studies on the Italian post-war migration, I want to highlight how simplified this depiction can be. Those who describe post-war migrants in the UK trust the socio-linguistic profile most commonly accepted, without considering the possible internal diversity of the communities. Italian migration studies, especially those carried before the super-diversity turn, avoid mentioning the possibility that post-war migrants could present other profiles, especially those who settled in London. However, if it was not a

theoretical issue in the past, nowadays, stereotypical and generalised representations risk being contradicted due to the internal variety and diversity characterising the new wave.

The migration, as a circumstance where super-diversity emerges, brings into question the meaning of Italianness and migrants' agreement with the national character, and this allows for a process of identity re-construction. This migration, happening in a globally interconnected world, inserts the new Italian migrants into a transnational dimension. Transnationsalism is a concept theorised by Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton in the early 1990s to address a change in migratory patterns. Their definition of transnationalism states that this concept describes "the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together the country of origin and their country of settlement" (1992b: 1). Although innovative, this notion was already introduced, but not theorised by Chaney in 1979, who pointed out the existence of "people who had their "feet in two societies" (1979: 209)" (Schiller *et al.*, 1992b: 5). Schiller *et al.*'s theorisation of transnationalism is then explicated in six points. Firstly, the scholars (1992b) explain that bounded concepts, such as ethnic community, restrain the understanding of *transnationalism*. Secondly, they highlight the connection between transnationalism and the rise of globalisation. Thirdly, the expression of transnationalism in daily practices is claimed. As a consequence, the fourth point states that transnationalism promotes a new understanding of *social identities*. The fifth point regards the effect of transnationalism on scholarly views by leading towards a reformulation of notions such as *nationalism* and *race*. Finally, the scholars mention the role of transmigrants in the reshaping of hegemonic contexts.

The most relevant for the present research is the third point: "transnationalism is grounded in the daily lives, activities, and social relationships of migrants" (Schiller *et al.*, 1992b: 5). This key point explains why this concept has become central in the theorisation of the pluralisation of identities in migratory contexts. Due to this encompassing of transnationalism in individuals' everyday lives and social relationships, it was easy for scholars to link it with the display of multiple identities in accordance with the situation lived by the migrants and discursively reported. As Vertovec explains: "Transnationalism and identity are concepts that inherently call for juxtaposition" (2001: 573), adding that "transnational connections affect migrants as never before with regard to practices of constructing, maintaining, and negotiating collective identities" (2001: 575). I would argue that transnational movements affect not only collective identities but also individual ones, since we see evidence of this in the presently described migration.

Vertovec (2001) highlights the importance of understanding different types of transnationalism, which cannot thus be a unitary phenomenon, and transnational patterns. Therefore, once adopting this model, we must carefully consider the type of migrants under examination and understand whether the notion of transnationalism applies to them or not. If, for some scholars, transnationalism perfectly describes every aspect of new forms of migration, for instance, the eastern European migration towards the UK described by Burrell (2010), in other cases such as the Italian case, we must carefully observe the forms of involvement with the host country and the motherland promoted by the new migrants. The involvement with the new society is not immediately obvious. In many cases, the migrants seemed detached from the social context of the host country. Only in some cases did the migrants seem linked to a Londoner lifestyle and the attendant social environments. We can affirm, then, that in some cases migrants really engage more with the homeland than with the host society, showing an imbalanced transnationalism. The absence of practices traditionally described as transnational shows that even this label is not entirely applicable to the whole wave. However, this leads to the identification of different practices, which, in the present case, seem to be more specifically linguistic. Therefore, for some participants, the only visible transnational pattern is their innovative use of the language, characterised by translanguaging.

### 3.6. Translanguaging: the translation of transnationalism into linguistic terms

The connection between the constructionist approach and the transnational analytical framework (Schiller *et al*., 1992a; 1992b), or as it is expressed by Duff, the "interdependence of language, identity, and transnationalism" (2015: 57), becomes clear in De Fina (2013), who relates transnationalism and the constructionist approach. Moreover, De Fina (2013) introduces a concept that has become popular in the last decade and that seems to be the translation of transnationalism into linguistic terms: *translanguaging*. If transnationalism is living a life with feet in two societies, translanguaging is living with feet in two (or more) languages. More theoretically, translanguaging has been seen as an attempt to abandon the unrealistic concept of monolingualisms coming into contact (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015). As transnationalism has become the idea of transcending geographical spaces, similarly, translanguaging has responded to the need to understand multilingual practices as a way of going beyond languages. The connection between transnationalism and translanguaging is obvious in Li Wei and Zhu Hua's title *Translanguaging Identities and Ideologies: Creating Transnational Space through Flexible Multilingual Practices Amongst Chinese University Students in the UK* (2013b), where the link between multilingual practices and transnational existence is clearly articulated.

*Translanguaging* is a term born in Welsh schools in the 1980s and firstly used by Cen Williams (1994) (Lewis, Jones and Baker, 2012). To be precise, Cen Williams is the father of the Welsh word *trawsieithu*, then translated as *translinguifying* and later modified into its definitive version: *translanguaging* (Lewis *et al*., 2012). The first definitions of this word make clearly visible its origin in bilingual education: "translanguaging entails using one language to reinforce the other in order to increase understanding and in order to augment the pupil's ability in both languages" (Williams, 2002: 40, in Lewis *et al*., 2012). From the educational field, this word has grown and developed, being adopted on many different occasions and not only in educational contexts. However, to understand fully its contemporary definition, we should not ignore its past. Born as a way of challenging the idea of two *monolingualisms* characterising Wales' linguistic scenario, it served the purpose of showing how bilingual, and multilingual, speakers can reconcile the use of two or more languages in speech, or in conversational moments, to share understanding and to develop knowledge. Translanguaging is seen as a problem-solving practice, and, hence, it is perfectly suited to the educational field (Li Wei, 2016). Moreover, it was first described as the "process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages" (Baker, 2011: 288).

The term left the educational context with Li Wei (2011), who adopted this term to describe the practices of three Chinese youths. To show his participants' ability in identity positioning and self-representation through the use of multilingual practices, Li Wei coined the concept of "translanguaging space" (2011: 2), where speakers' identities and cultural knowledge not only co-exist, but also merge together to create new cultural, meaningful habits and identities. In Zhu Hua, Li Wei and Lyons's words, "Translanguaging Space is a space created by and for Translanguaging practices" (2017: 412). Translanguaging spaces are physical (e.g., the Polish shop based in London chosen as the object of research by Zhu Hua *et al.* [2017]) or conversational spaces in which speakers engage in multilingual practices in order to transcend their physical and geographical concreteness to connect, and interconnect different cultural and linguistic systems. Li Wei explains such connections, maintaining that:

> Translanguaging is both going between different linguistic structures and systems [...] and going beyond them. It includes the full range of linguistic performances of multilingual language users for purposes that transcend the combination of structures, the alternation between systems, the transmission of information and the representation of values, identities and relationships. (2011: 1223)

Li Wei's emphasis on the interactionality of translanguaging spaces is pivotal, since it situates this concept in a conversational analytical dimension, which leaves the stage to speakers as social actors who actively create new cultural meanings (2011). Translanguaging is, then, a tool for developing new identities, and reinforcing social networks (Creese and Blackledge, 2010b; Li Wei, 2011), especially in transnational contexts (Li Wei and Zhu Hua, 2013b). In their paper, Li Wei and Zhu Hua (2013b) illustrate how translanguaging connects the negotiation of transnational identities with multilingual language practices. The scholars present examples of their participants' translanguaging practices. When the participants discuss what they would like to do when they graduate, one of them says he will work as a ''white-collar dog'' (Li Wei and Zhu Hua, 2013b: 523). Since this phrase in Chinese is pronounced as *bailinggou*, one of the speakers replies saying "you are already bilingual!" (Li Wei and Zhu Hua, 2013b: 523). The creativity, the reference to shared cultural elements, and the speakers' transational identities are all represented in this example.

The two scholars also reflect on translanguaging by explaining the different meanings and interpretations of the prefix 'trans'. As already mentioned, translanguaging allows the speaker to go beyond linguistic systems and, thus, bounded spaces. The prefix, however, also recalls the idea of *transformation*. Its transformative nature is expressed through "different dimensions of the multilingual speakers' linguistic, cognitive, and social skills" brought together in order to reconstruct "speakers' skills, knowledge, experience, attitudes and beliefs; thus creating a new identity for the multilingual speaker" (Li Wei and Zhu Hua, 2013b: 519). The last aspect of the affix 'trans' concerns the transdisciplinarity of translanguaging, and, thus, its capacity to connect several elements of human lives under a holistic analytical umbrella.

I do not review here Li Wei and associates' works on translanguaging in class (among others: Creese and Blackledge, 2010b; García and Li Wei, 2014) and in English as a Lingua Franca studies (Li Wei, 2016) since education and ELF fall outside the scope of my thesis. However, translanguaging has never left the field where it was born, and it has not yet frequently been applied to migratory sets. Currently, its application to migrant communities is still a niche choice while the present study suggests the relevance of this practice for new migrants and their processes of identity construction. Due to the scarcity of sources on translanguaging in everyday life, some 'translanguaging in education' sources are employed in Chapter 5, as well as in the following sub-section, where I discuss the reasons for adopting a

translanguaging model and its relation to the traditional interpretation of the linguistic phenomena developed in languages in contact situations.

#### 3.6.1. The reasons for using the translanguaging framework and its relation to traditional frameworks on contact phenomena

Traditional scholars have raised doubts about the so-called *translanguaging turn* that linguistics took (García and Li Wei, 2014). Their main objection concerns the supposed pointlessness of the creation of a new term to describe what they believe to be phenomena that have been sufficiently categorised for decades. It is not surprising, then, that Li Wei (2018c) felt an urgent need to discuss the differences between translanguaging and code-switching in his blog (blog.oup.com/2018/05/translanguaging-code-switching-difference). Li Wei, however, is not the only scholar concerned with the clarification of the new framework. In fact, all the literature on translanguaging and the studies that apply this model start with a defence and a justification of its use (Mazzaferro, 2018). In explaining the evolution of translanguaging, Weiyun He (2013) points out that translanguaging seems to contrast with the Matrix Language Frame model (MLF) and the Rational Choice (RC) model.[15] Nonetheless, Weiyun He (2013) does not provide any thorough explanation for this claim. It is true, though, that Li Wei started to question the RC model even before developing the translanguaging framework. In 2005, he suggested that the application of the RC model risks becoming a top-down model imposed by researchers (Li Wei, 2005b). Although acknowledging the merits of this model, Li Wei also claims that: "The assumption of rationality at the level of each individual social actor is not sufficient to explain specific structural phenomena or social conditions in each individual social act" (2005b: 377). Following Li Wei's discussion, Gafaranga (2005) questions the idea of addressing linguistic phenomena as fixed and stable objects. He draws an interesting parallel between the fluid and constructivist nature of social identities (see section 3.3.) and linguistic phenomena. He maintains that the assumption "language-reflects-society" (2005: 287) is some-

[15] The MLF was posited by Myers-Scotton (1993a; 1995), who affirms that, in every situation of language contact, we can find a Matrix Language (ML) and an Embedded Language (EL). The ML is the less marked language, the language that does not carry any particular function and the one considered "safer" (Myers-Scotton, 1995: 75). This theorization though is problematic since in some contexts speakers may not share the understanding of markedness. Myers-Scotton (1995) also explains that the ML is the language that provides more morphemes. The EL, on the other hand, is the L2, the language that provides material for switches and borrowings. While the MLF model focuses mostly on grammatical processes, with the Rational Choice model, Myers-Scotton (1999; 2002) shifted to a more functionalist type of analysis. To decide whether a choice is marked or unmarked, Myers-Scotton suggests studying the context in which decisions are taken, the speakers' backgrounds and the set of "Rights and Obligations" (RO sets) (1999: 1263) agreed among them.

times inaccurate and misleading. Society conflicts and cultural differences are not always reflected in linguistic practices, or at least the social meaning of languages, and language mixing, cannot be over-generalised and imposed to entire nations or communities. Similarly, Zhu Hua maintains that "there is no simple, one-to one association between language and social values" (2008: 1800).

While the MLF crystallises the social values of languages in contact (Zhu Hua, 2008; 2014) by attributing to them specific meanings and purposes diffusely acknowledged and exploited by the speakers, translanguaging refuses such a holistic rationality (Weiyun He, 2013). In addition, we can hypothesise that the MLF and the RC approach contrast with the translanguaging framework since they depend on the idea that separate codes belong to different national groups, while post-modern and late modern multilingual practices show the opposite. Although it seems obvious that the theoretical premises of analysis are different, the doubt about the need for a new term still remains. To clarify this point we need to trace the evolution of the translanguaging model.

Li Wei's starting point for his conceptualisation of translanguaging was García's definition. García defines it as "multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds" (2009: 45). However, Li Wei maintains that García's description still covers the practices traditionally highlighted in multilingualism studies (2011) and this seems to be controversial, since translanguaging means surpassing the traditional distinction of codes that code-switching is based on (Weiyun He, 2013). On the other hand, also starting with García's interpretation, Creese and Blackledge explain that "translanguaging goes beyond code-switching, but it incorporates it" (2010a: 555). Conversely, according to Li Wei (2011), the notion of *translanguaging* builds on the concept of *languaging*. As he explains (Li Wei, 2018a), languaging is a concept inherited from psycholinguistics, which derives from the studies of biologists and neuroscientists who saw language as belonging to the set of human activities and not as a set of grammatical rules.

In his blog, Li Wei seems to suggest an ontological difference between code-switching and translanguaging. He affirms that code-switching involves the alternation of two well-defined codes occurring at specific points in conversation, and these shifts are governed by grammatical and functional rules. Researchers focussing on code-switching will, then, generally produce structuralist studies. On the contrary, he describes translanguaging as a "process of meaning - and sense-making. The analytical focus is therefore on how the language user draws upon different linguistic, cognitive and semiotic resources to make meaning and make sense"

(blog.oup.com/2018/05/translanguaging-code-switching-difference/). Translanguaging is interpreted as the mechanism leading the speakers to the construction of meaning and a "sense of their social reality" (Mazzaferro, 2018: 6).

Within the translanguaging model, languages are understood as social systems which combine, merge and collide in a constant creative process (Li Wei, 2018a). Canagarajah defines translanguaging as "the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system" (2011: 401). In considering the translanguaging practices of migrants, we would see how the languages they live in and their full repertoire of language skills come together - in selected spaces that allow this process - to create a fluid style. The translanguaging model suggests a distancing from the interpretation of languages as "fixed or stable entities" (Mazzaferro, 2018: 2) in order to see language more as "practice and action performed by individuals in reflexive, relational and dialogical ways" (Mazzaferro, 2018: 2). Therefore, a translanguaging approach proposes transcending the focus on named languages (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015) in order to concentrate on "speakers' construction and use of original and complex interrelated discursive practices that cannot be easily assigned to one or another traditional definition of a language, but that make up the speakers' complete language repertoire" (García and Li Wei, 2014: 22). This perspective centres each speaker's linguistic repertoire and their idiolects (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015). Speakers' linguistic repertoires are thus analysed in terms of speakers' life trajectories more than "in the realm of speech community" (Busch, 2017: 345). In Chapter 5, I show how the participants themselves realise that their linguistic practices are the result of their experiences and that named languages, as English or Italian, are abstract labels that are not separated anymore in their everyday talk. Translanguaging "goes beyond the sociolinguistic conception of space or domain which order the multivocality" and, thus, the speakers are responsible for their "languaging performance" (García and Li Wei, 2014: 39). Consequently, this model can be useful in cases where languages do not have a fixed social meaning and where deterministic considerations of the linguistic choices of the speakers would be hazardous. Moreover, according to this model, speakers can challenge or re-establish the social meanings of languages involved in the mixing for the achievement of "their communicative goals" (Schreiber, 2015: 72).

Given the focus translanguaging places on personal backgrounds and the history of the speakers, it is hard to position it in a community perspective. On the other hand, it seems to suit the instability presented by late modern migrants and their challenge to community feeling (see sub-section 3.3.2.). For instance, as in the case chosen for the present research,

translanguaging stands as a possibility for the new migrants, although it does not adhere to social rules firmly established by the entire group itself. Translanguaging is a continuous process the speakers rely on to perform different identities, to show their history, and to share a common history with those involved in the interactions. Although some trends in the realisation of translanguaging performances can be highlighted (Fang and Shaobin, 2016), speakers are in control of the socio-cultural meanings attributed to these. The possibility of translanguaging is given by a shared linguistic repertoire, which, however, every speaker exploits in different ways (Paulsrud and Straszer, 2018).

The aim of this section was to show how scholars have theorised translanguaging in their attempts to justify their theoretical choices. It should be clear that if researchers adopt this model they seek to investigate contact phenomena by stressing the fluid process of mixing in connection to the speakers' desire to share aspects of their personal history and their set of beliefs. In my reading of the translanguaging literature, however, there is no intention to claim that translanguaging is completely separate from traditional forms of mixing phenomena. The scholars reviewed above undertake analyses that differ from the structural analysis carried out by those who focus on code-switching and borrowings (among many others, Bentahila and Davies, 1995; Muysken, 1997; 2000; Pfaff, 1979; Poplack, 1980; 1988; 2017; Poplack and Dion, 2012; Poplack and Meechan, 1995; 1998; Poplack and Sankoff, 1984; Poplack *et al.*, 1988; Sankoff *et al*. 1990; 1991). The difference does not concern the grammatical phenomena *per se*. Conversely, those who opt for the translanguaging approach focus on the processes that result in translanguaging performance, which can, however, include the contact phenomena that have been studied for decades. Translanguaging is then considered as the result of engagement in the development and realisation of these phenomena, and it theoretically supports the passage from a functionally marked use of the contact phenomena to a full exploitation of the linguistic resources at the speakers' disposal. Therefore, I do not dwell here on the description of the phenomena we could analyse in my dataset (presented in Pepe [2018]), if a structural approach had been chosen.

### 3.7. Conclusion

This complex chapter aimed to present an overview of the theoretical frameworks my analysis is based on. The main points emerging from this chapter are:

- Indexicality and social identities: indexicality is seen as the main principle guiding individuals in the selection and display of identities. Indexicality also recalls the socio-culutral system of values individuals rely on for the process of identity construction and negotiation.
- Membership and grouping: individuals, through discourse practices, reflect on their membership, by challenging affiliations and establishing new grouping criteria based on their beliefs and their needs.
- Othering: the bounderies of groups are highlighted through a process which involves the identification of the *other*. The *other* determines membership and influences the practices of the group.
- Transationalism and translanguaging: the two concepts are entangled and they explain the interconnection of individuals with different socio-cultural, economic, political systems and languages in late modernity. These also show the fluidity of contemporary migrants' lifes.

The chapter is structured as follows. Firstly, I reviewed the theories underpinning the constructionist approach. Empirical studies based on these theories showed the relation between language in use and the construction of identity. Language is seen as a powerful tool to shape the performance of identity. From these sections, it emerged that identities are plural, sometimes contradictory, unstable, negotiated, picked, and performed. The performance of identities can happen in different spaces, and linguists have suggested that, along with social practices, discourse practices are also suitable loci in which identities can undergo this process of development. In the dialogic nature of human speech, we find the basis for the negotiation and the presentation of the self (section 3.3.). The stress on the function of discourse practice in the construction of identities is justified in Chapter 5, where the absence of shared community social practices of the post-2008 crisis wave is highlighted. The techniques used by the speakers to do such identity work were then reviewed (3.3.1. and 3.4.). In particular, I focused on the *othering* practice, crucial for the understanding of the data collected. In this chapter, I also aimed to show how communities are now perceived differently and how individuals gained a core relevance in the study of community dynamics (sub-section 3.3.2.). Such stress on the individual emerged even when the chapter shifted to the review of a very recent theoretical framework, the translanguaging framework (section 3.6.). The translanguaging approach was compared with other past models and its validity justified through the overview of

the most recent research which also adopted this framework. However, I dwell further on the nature of translanguaging in Chapter 5, where I rely on those studies to analyse the translanguaging performances of my participants. Before presenting my analysis, though, it is necessary to explain my methods and the rationale for the methods used to carry out the present investigation.

# Chapter 4. Methodology

## 4. Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a rationale for my methodological choices in this study. In the first section, my research questions are re-stated (they have been introduced in section 1.2.) and explained in relation to the literature review presented in the previous chapter and to the methodology adopted for this study. Consequently, the concrete application of the methods is presented. I explain the reasons for collecting two different types of data (spontaneous conversations and interviews), and I explain how these data have been treated. I decided to opt for a qualitative approach which better suited the context of research. In addition, I decided to follow the last two decades tradition of Italian migration studies of qualitative studies (see 2.3.1. and 2.4.). The in-depth analyses of participants' relevant conversational passages and narratives represent the core of my study and, thus, this chapter focuses on the explanation of the qualitative analytical processes through which I interpreted the data. This chapter concludes with a description of the sociolinguistic profile of this project's participants and with considerations about the presentation of the data.

## 4.1. Research questions and their rationale

The first aim of this research is to offer up-to-date knowledge about the new Italian migrants, by focusing on the social, cultural, and linguistic features characterising the post-2008 crisis wave. Thus, my first research question is:

1. What are some of the traits that compose the socio-cultural linguistic profiles of the new Italian migrants?

This question is partly answered through the review of the few studies on the new wave carried out so far (see section 2.5.), and partly through my study conducted with the purpose of suggesting updates in the descriptions provided by the previously-mentioned studies. As already explained, the studies reviewed in that section were carried out before the new migration had reached its peak, which happened in the two-year period from the end of 2012 to the beginning of 2015 (Tintori and Romei, 2017). Since the post-2008 crisis wave grew substantially during this period, the studies conducted previously can only provide a partial image of it. My investigation suggests that the image of the highly educated migrant needs to be challenged, since it is no longer representative of the entire wave. This question generates five sub-questions, here listed:

1.a. What challenges do post-crisis Italian migrants in London pose to the image of the brain drain?

1.b. Which are the socio-cultural features of novelty characterising the post-crisis wave in opposition to the post-war wave?

1.c. How do post-crisis migrants situate themselves in regard to the historical Italian community in London?

1.d. What are the linguistic features that distinguish the post-crisis migrants compared to the post-war migrants?

1.e. What are the linguistic features that might suggest a similarity between the two waves?

Socio-cultural investigation of the post-2008 crisis wave is important because it provides the background to my analysis. As I explained in Chapter 2, the traditional studies of Italian migrants relied on a strong concept of community (and speech community). By contrast, post-2008 crisis migrants seem to reject the classical idea of community and this represents a novelty in the panorama of Italian linguistic migration studies. Since new migrants no longer adopt the traditional means and spaces used to strengthen the linguistic patterns characterising tight-knit migrant speech communities (traditional rituals, ethnic neighbourhoods, family businesses, community media, etc.), I needed to understand whether new means were established and how speakers cope with the absence of the traditional ones. This part of the investigation forms the basis of the linguistic analysis conducted which started after the formulation of the second research question, set out below:

2. What type of multilingual practices do the post-2008 migrants engage with during in-group gatherings?

A preliminary phase of investigation (explained in 4.3.1.) suggested that post-crisis migrants uses all the linguistic resources (e.g., Italian varieties, English and dialects) at their disposal when they gather together. The multilingual practices of post-2008 migrants are described as translanguaging (see 3.6. for a definition). A close, in-depth analysis of these social gatherings provides an understanding of the connection between contexts, situations, speakers, social communicative expectations, addressees and addressors. Furthermore, the study of these elements tells us how the contemporary migrants exploit the new linguistic resources they have

at their disposal and whether translanguaging has indexical meaning for the participants. This leads to the third question:

3. How do post-2008 migrants deploy the languages of their linguistic repertoires to construct, negotiate and display their social identities, in agreement with the principles of social identity construction?

The present research aims to investigate not only the linguistic repertoire of post-2008 crisis migrants but also their use of this repertoire. Italian migrants' linguistic repertoire usually includes varieties of Italian and English, and in some cases Italian dialects (as mentioned in 2.1., 2.5. and better explained in 4.3.1.4.). The participants use these linguistic resources in everyday conversations to start processes of identity construction and negotiation. The speakers involved in this project showed the need to negotiate social identities inherited by the Italian socio-cultural system, to perform new transnational social identities (as the professional ones), and to construct their migratory social identities in relation to those who remained in Italy. For this reason, I wanted to obtain spontaneously occurring conversations in which speakers would engage with multilingual practices (reviewed in 3.6.). Participant observation yielded a dataset which has been analysed qualitatively to understand the situations in which multilingual practices are nourished. The qualitative analysis of the natural speech of the participants was then able to yield answers to the following sub-questions:

3.a. What indexical meanings does translanguaging add to the content of the conversations?

Indexicality (reviewed in 3.2.1.) refers to the property of one stylistic element or one linguistic practice to index a set of features. By engaging with translanguaging, post-crisis migrants index their new transnational identities. Participants also discussed the indexicality of some features characterising their multilingual practices and which inform the social identity of the wave.

3.b. What are the processes of membership the participants rely on to categorise themselves? Are these connected with their multilingual practices and how are these linked?

Post-crisis migrants acknowledge that the post-crisis wave is not homogeneous, and they refuse a priori traditional labelling (concepts reviewed in 3.3. - more specifically in 3.3.1. and 3.3.2.). My study wants to show the relation between self-categorisation dynamics (discussed in 3.3.) and the engagement with multilingual practices.

3.c. How do the post-2008 crisis migrants present themselves? How do they position themselves in relation to other migrant and non-migrant speakers?

One technique this projects' participants deploy concerns the identification of a *other* which gives participants the opportunity to highlight differences and therefore to determine features relevant for the groups participants belong to. As emerged from the literature review in 3.4.1. and 3.4.2., these new migrants refer to several others while refusing traditional others (as the host society).

The questions above are answered with the in-depth qualitative analysis of passages of conversations and narratives in relation to participants' answers given in their interviews (processes of data collection explained in 4.3.). Consequently, I investigated more participants' understanding of translanguaging. Thus, the last research question is:

4. What are participants' attitudes towards translanguaging and what are the implications of these attitudes for the negotiation of affiliation to the post-2008 group?

I investigated the awareness of the speakers engaging in translanguaging, their opinions about their migratory (linguistic) experience, their contextualisation and understanding of the type of phenomena produced, and their agreement on the use of them as in-group talk markers. As mentioned, these practices do not always have the function of displaying new identities. They may be indices of in-group talk, and they are deployed functionally in order to signal affiliation and disaffiliation with the new wave and with the status of being a migrant. To answer the third question, the sub-questions generated by it, and the fourth question I decided to triangulate the spontaneous data with interviews. In this way, the perspective of the protagonists regarding such migratory phenomenon enriched my reflections and interpretations which are elaborated through my investigation.

Having listed the research questions that prompted this study, this chapter now proceeds with the presentation of the methodology chosen. The core results of this investigation are yielded by the qualitative analysis of the data, and, therefore, I now further explain my decision to opt for this methodological approach.

### 4.2. The reasons for choosing a qualitative approach

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study. This means that for the present research I selected a small sample of participants and I carried out analyses informed by the qualitative method (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Therefore, in the thesis, I only discuss in-depth a relatively

small number of representative and symbolic segments taken from the dataset. In the last two decades, scholars have suggested that this approach is the only one suitable to conduct studies concerned with constructionist identity processes (Tranekjær, 2015). In this case, it seemed functional to study closely the multilingual practices of the post-crisis migrants during natural events. Moreover, the qualitative method is nowadays considered the most appropriate option for understanding the linguistic practices of speakers and the consequences of such behaviour in interactional situated contexts (Dervin and Risager, 2015). This type of approach has been preferred in studies which were intended to situate the realisation of language contact phenomena in concrete situations and practices (see, among many others, Auer, 2007; Auer, Arnhold and Bueno-Anida, 2005; Bailey, 2007; Bierbach and Birken-Silverman, 2007; Ciliberti, 2007; De Fina, 2006; 2007a; 2007b; 2007c; 2015a; 2015b; 2017; Li Wei, 2005b; Dervin and Risager, 2015; Di Salvo and Moreno, 2017; Myers-Scotton and Bolonyai, 2001; Panese, 1992; Pasquandrea, 2008; Rocchi, 2006; Williams, 2005). This approach allows for the application of a particular analytical framework, Membership Categorization Analysis (Schegloff, 2007; Tranekjær, 2015), which is adopted to explore the work on identity conducted by this project's participants.

This study is a preliminary attempt to provide a picture of an ongoing migration through the selection of a representative sample. However, a preliminary phase of investigation immediately foregrounded the difficulty of drawing general considerations about the entire wave due to its extreme heterogeneity. The heterogeneity of the sample selected for this project represents, on a smaller scale, the inhomogeneity of the post-2008 crisis wave. The instability of the studied group influenced my methodological choices. As we better understand from the data, the participants refuse classical methods of grouping and socio-culturally traditionally marked descriptions of their status. Their identity processes undergo constant mutations, as does their linguistic repertoire, and the use they make of the linguistic resources at their disposal do not have a fixed and (pre-)determined nature. Qualitative researchers, especially those who have a grounded theory approach (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Smith, 1983) such as me, rely on their data and on their informants to shape the project, and the project can be reshaped in the course of the research process. Participants are at the centre of the investigation, and they are the key to understanding their linguistic choices. Social variables are thus only used to group the participants and to describe them broadly. However, every situation is analysed by taking into consideration a range of factors influencing the production of language contact phenomena. Flick, von Kardorff, and Steinke (2004) maintain that qualitative research offers the possibility

of comprehending the phenomena studied from the inside, relying on the ideas, the beliefs and the attitudes of people who live the situation researched and who can then be seen as *social actors* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). For the present research, this methodological choice appeared necessary since the contribution of the social actors directly challenged the traditional approach for the study of migratory groups. Relying so extensively on the participants and giving them the power to (re)direct the research process can be considered unscientific according to some views. As the present project shows, however, in this case, the informants' insight truly changed my perspective on the investigated group and allowed for a process of analysis which would have been impossible if the participants' voices had been ignored. By following the principles of grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 1990), data were analysed as soon as collected and the following processes of data collection were influenced by the outcome of those preliminary analyses. In this way, this investigation became a dialogical process in constant evolution. Here, it begins to emerge how relevant and influential my own perspective and my personal involvement with the studied matter is on the results from this project.

Qualitative analyses are, without doubt, interpretive. Interpretation is undertaken by the researchers who produce analyses of the data according to their own perceptions and understanding of the phenomena studied. Huberman and Miles explain that the researcher is essentially the main "measurement device" (2002: 7). This interpretive dimension offers possibilities for criticism. The difficulty of generalising the results obtained through a qualitative analysis is the main criticism moved against the qualitative method. However, in my opinion, interpretation permeates our entire system of knowledge and the fact that "qualitative sociolinguistic researchers cannot incontrovertibly prove that they are right (or wrong)" (Johnston, 2000: 60) is in alignment with a post-positivistic paradigm (McGregor and Murnane, 2010). Respecting academic standards, we can produce robust pieces of research while nevertheless accepting the impossibility of arriving at a universally accepted truth. Robustness can be achieved by following the methods chosen with rigorous constancy. Moreover, scholars have developed techniques to support the strength of qualitative research. The one adopted for the present research is triangulation.

### 4.3. Triangulation

Triangulation can be interpreted, and it has been understood by many scholars, as the "use of multiple data-gathering techniques […] to investigate the same phenomenon" (Berg, 2007: 5). However, the term has also been used to describe the involvement of different types of data, different researchers, frameworks and methodological approaches (Berg, 2007). My

research has been structured on different levels of data collection. Consequently, the dataset I obtained is formed of different types of data, which are then studied cross-comparatively. The term *triangulation*, borrowed from the field of nautical science, was used for the first time for qualitative research by Denzin (1970). As Dörnyei (2007) maintains, triangulation is "one of the most efficient ways of reducing the chance of systematic bias in a qualitative study" (2007: 61). In particular, triangulation seems fundamental for researchers who have not yet had the chance to build a strong "image of integrity" (Dörnyei, 2007: 59).

#### 4.3.1. Ethnography (of speaking) and participant observation

First, I undertook exploratory observations of social activities and practices of the post-2008 crisis wave. This process was supported and facilitated by my belonging to the post-2008 crisis wave. Being a member of the wave was very helpful for gathering first-hand data. However, I have also tried to critically analyse and understand my position as researcher in every step of the investigation in order to be as more objective as possible. In addition, I reflect on researcher's positionality in 6.2. and 6.4., since it is important to see the process of data analysis to better understand my role. Considerations on socio-cultural features are proposed on the basis of my direct observation and participation in activities organised by post-crisis migrants, and comparisons with the data provided directly to myself by Italian institutions (such as the consulate) and newspapers. Fieldwork was carried out in different phases. My in the fieldwork began in October 2012. However, a deeper study of this new wave started in November 2013 when I carried out a pilot study on this new group for an MA assignment. Proper investigation for the present study began in September 2015. I thus obtained access to cultural events and the social practices of sub-groups of new Italian migrants where their linguistic practices were observed.

Secondly, I focused on a small group of representative members of the post-2008 crisis wave selected for the project, observing them in natural settings. I thus started the phase of participant observation, which means watching and examining the participants in natural settings (Jorgensen, 2015). For the present study, *natural settings* mean settings in which migrants, and in particular those selected for the project, would spontaneously gather, regardless of the research. Following the techniques of participant observation, I audio-recorded the participants. I explain my sampling criteria in detail in sub-section 4.3.1.2. Suffice here to say that some of the members of the post-2008 crisis wave were considered representative because they present the characteristics listed by studies on the new Italian migrants (see section 2.5.). Others were selected because they demonstrate the enlargement of the post-2008 crisis wave, which

also included uneducated (or poorly educated) migrants who moved mainly for economic reasons. However, the selection of the sample happened quite naturally, as I simply followed all the branches of my personal social network. In order to study post-crisis migrants' linguistic repertoires and their uses of these, I wanted to record natural and spontaneous conversations.

Since I was always present during the recording phase, I did not take notes during my observation. However, I commented my data while processing them, by noting down the relevant characteristics of each speaker, their relationship with each other, the situations where the conversations were recorded, important reactions of the speakers, relevant passages that deserved attention, recurring patterns, and possible questions to ask to the participants during their interviews. The qualitatively informed method for data collection that I used to carry out this investigation is called "ethnography of speaking" (Bauman and Sherzer, 1974) or the "ethnography of communication" (Hymes, 1974). Bauman and Sherzer affirm that "ethnography of speaking may be conceived of as research directed toward the formulation of descriptive theories of speaking as a cultural system" (1974: 6). Instead, Hymes (1974) focuses his definition on the dualistic nature that a linguistic study should have. In both cases, the result is the definition of ethnography as the theorisation of the study of language in context. The basis for ethnography of speaking lies in the concept that "speaking, like other systems of behavior [...] is organized in each society in culture specific ways" (Bauman and Sherzer, 1974: 8). Therefore, linguists who aim to investigate the concrete uses of a language cannot ignore the socio-cultural environment in which such a language is spoken. For ethnographers of speaking, a language is not a mere set of grammar rules which every speaker must follow. The ethnographer's purpose is to discover the "understanding" of speakers and to codify the "rules for the production and interpretation of speech" (Bauman and Sherzer, 1974: 10). As Hymes maintains:

> One cannot take linguistic form, a given code, or even speech itself, as a limiting frame of reference. One must take as context a community, or network of persons, investigating its communicative activities as a whole, so that any use of channel and code takes its place as part of the resources upon which the member draws. (1974: 4)

As we saw in the previous chapter, the most recent studies on language contact stress the interpretation of languages as practices of human beings, able to support and enhance speakers' social performances. Therefore, I would argue that this method is aligned with research that investigates the socio-cultural and linguistic dynamics that inform multilingual practices.

#### 4.3.1.1. Participant observation and the insider researcher

Participant observation is a technique developed in the field of ethnographic studies. It consists of the systematic and direct examination of the sample selected for the research, of the context, and of the types of situations lived by the investigated social actors. For this study, participant observation meant the presence of the researcher in every event recorded, although the actual level of researcher participation during the events varied. The events recorded consisted mainly of recreational gatherings which appeared to be friendly, relaxed social gatherings and meetings. I chose this technique since I wanted to exploit my insider position. During the events recorded, then, I played two roles. Firstly, I actively participated in the social gathering, since the participants perceived me as a friend, most of the time, or a friend of a friend, in a few cases. Secondly, I was able to directly observe speakers' reactions to linguistic phenomena, and to understand the power relations among the speakers, their linguistic attitudes and their general social behaviour.

In addition, my presence during these events seemed useful for building friendly relations with those participants who did not know me well. This has been the key to becoming accepted in any networks I entered to carry out this research. As I said, my presence among participants was planned in order to gain access, as much as possible, to informants' opinions, beliefs and ideologies, and no one seemed distressed by my questions. I believe that this happened owing to the commonality of experiences lived by the informants and myself, as Rubino (2014a) also argues in her considerations about her role as a researcher in her own community. Creating relaxed and friendly environments in which the recordings could happen facilitated the collection of truly spontaneous data. Moreover, establishing a friendly relationship with my informants seemed a valid tool in anticipation of the interviewing phase (explained in sub-section 4.3.2.). Hypotheses drawn during the observation phase and topics discussed during the recorded events have inspired most of the interview questions. This back-and-forth process between the data processing and the following phases of data collection/analyses resulted in a constant development of my research, which was necessary due to the ongoing nature of the phenomenon studied (the post-2008 crisis migration). This process was carried out in agreement with the interpretive take (Mottier, 2005) that permeated the research; data were created through a reflexive research process that involved both myself and the participants.

Moreover, the direct observation of natural and spontaneously occurring events increased the possibility of understanding the social activities in which the participants' linguistic practices develop. Agreeing with Sherzer, who affirms that "most often in social life it is the unsaid

that lies behind the said that must be analysed" (1977: 52), participant observation has been a tool to better understand informants' minds. To be more precise, I was able to study speakers' reactions to translanguaging and to analyse the factors that allowed its realisation. My participation at the events helped me to better understand the linguistic dynamics of the groups studied.

My role in the events varied according to the level of acquaintance with informants. I have always considered myself as a "participant observer" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 274), being an eligible candidate to participate in the research. For this reason, I acted as an insider researcher (Van Heugten, 2004), not only observing the participants but also taking an active part in the recorded events. Nevertheless, my role as insider did need to be balanced and calibrated. Therefore, I alternated moments of more active participation in which case I led the conversations towards topics noteworthy for the research, and phases in which I stepped back, allowing my participants the possibility of freely discussing any theme. During the first stages of observation and recordings in natural settings, I tried not to use any language contact phenomena, as I did not want to elicit any kind of realisation. However, this behaviour contrasted with my natural linguistic practices and, therefore, I decided to align spontaneously with the linguistic choices of the informants. Due to our common experiences, my personal idiolect (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015) presents similarities with the participants' idiolects. For this reason, in my analyses, I considered myself as a participant, performing identities through linguistic means solicited by the other speakers involved in the conversation. I would argue that the informants did not perceive any elicitation and, thus, I obtained truly spontaneous conversational episodes. Clearly, I cannot be definitely sure about my claim. However, participants never pointed out my realisations of translingual items. Participants perceived me not only as a friend but also as a member of the post-2008 crisis wave, therefore as a person allowed to use translanguaging freely. In addition, if we analyse the range of topics discussed in the natural conversations we understand the naturalness of them. Participants talked naturally and freely about any topic, without censoring themselves. To conclude, another element can support my claim about the naturalness and spontaneity of the data collected. Since I regularly encountered my participants not for research purposes, I can confirm that their linguistic behaviour did not present relevant differences in occasion of the recordings. Informal discussions were conducted at the end of each recording to understand participants' feeling about the data collection method, and participants often confirmed that the recorder was not an intrusive presence and

that they did not felt observed or influenced by my presence and involvement in the conversations.

#### 4.3.1.2. Selecting the participants

The selection of the participants for the present study was crucial to gathering valid data. My aim was to select representative members of the post-2008 crisis wave. In their selection, I immediately understood that I could not entirely align with the previous sociological studies on the new Italian mobility (see section 2.5. for references) as, from my ethnography, it was clear that the image provided was not displaying the multifaceted nature of the post-crisis wave. Thus, on the one hand, I wanted people who would fit the description of the *highly educated migrant* who moved to work in the financial and economic sectors or in other sectors linked to Italian prestige (for instance, fashion). On the other hand, I included migrants who arrived in London only due to the difficult Italian economic situation and who were keen to accept any kind of job available. This type of new migrant does not fit into the description provided by Conti (2012), Sacco (2013) and Scotto (2015a; 2015b) but my ethnographic observation led me to also include this type since they represent a relevant part of the post-2008 crisis wave.

I followed Guzzo's example (2014) of gathering people interested in participating. As explained in section 2.4., she investigated the language of the Italian migrants living in Bedford. I followed her example because she highlights the importance of building a relationship with the investigated group in order to obtain good quality data, understanding the value of being perceived as a member of it. Studies of Italian communities, or on Italian migrant families, often mention the importance of this research step, seeing the relation between researchers and participants as the key to truly accessing speakers' lives (Cavallaro, 2006; Palumbo, 2013; Pasquandrea, 2008; Rubino, 2014a). In many cases, I exploited the advantage of knowing the participants well and, thus, they obviously saw me as part of their networks. However, establishing a stronger friendly relation with each participant allowed me to observe the speakers in many contexts, and to complete my study of their linguistic practices with pieces of information gathered over the course of several years. Participants were not only observed during the events recorded, but also on other social occasions when they interacted with other migrants or with their family and friends living in Italy.

For the present project, participants have been found owing to a chain of acquaintances, a technique developed by Milroy (1987) and Eckert (2000a). The 'friend of a friend' chain

appears to be the most profitable method for gathering participants and for accessing spontaneous examples of daily communicative practices. More precisely, my close friends, who met the criteria chosen to tailor the participant sample, were initially included in the project. Consequently, they suggested other people who could become informants. Such shared acquaintances were fundamental in making the new informants feel more comfortable about participating in the project. The 'chain of friends' worked ideally for gathering people who could engage in spontaneous discussion. It was important to create natural situations that reflected the reality lived by the new Italian migrants. With this aim in mind, I used this method, generally called the "snowball technique" (Milroy and Gordon, 2003: 32), to enlarge the sample. This method is extremely fruitful. Nonetheless, there are some negative effects generated by the use of this technique. Eckert reminds us that ethnographic researchers must be careful so that "the process of networking does not lead one to focus on a small subset of the population" (Eckert, 2000a: 77). Many times I have mentioned that the post-2008 crisis wave is not homogeneous and, thus, I needed to avoid a restricted focus on one sub-group, which could end up yielding only a partial picture of the new Italian migration. Researchers adopting the snowball technique must be aware of 'redirecting the ball' in case the sample of informants tends towards being too homogenous and uniform. For instance, I enlarged my sample following every branch of my personal social network, asking my direct acquaintances to then introduce me only to people I believed were appropriate to participate in a project on the new Italian migration.

Through this chain, my direct friends introduced me into their networks, presenting me as an insider. The reason for introducing me was always overtly stated, although, due to the similarity in age and experience, I was mostly perceived as a new acquaintance more than as a researcher. For ethical reasons, people were informed about my research on the new Italian migrants, but the purposes and the details of the research were not explained to the participants in order to reduce the risk of influencing their linguistic behaviour, and with the explicit aim of not spoiling the naturalness of the conversations. Nevertheless, it must be said that most of the participants immediately recognised what could be of interest in their experience and in their linguistic practices. Some of the participants introduced the concept of languages in contact phenomena by acknowledging their use of English terms in Italian monolingual speech. This awareness may have partially affected the spontaneity of their discourses, which, nonetheless seemed generally truly spontaneous and, therefore, satisfactory for the project.

The sample is formed of 21 people. All of them were recorded in natural settings and 15 of those were also interviewed. The participants closer to me were questioned on multiple occasions about their beliefs, although sometimes informally. However, it must be said that all these elements helped me to draw conclusions about their linguistic practices. Some of the other participants decided to withdraw from the research after the first recording; nonetheless, they did give their consent to the use of the data collected on that initial occasion. As a disadvantage of the use of the 'friend of friend' chain, I must highlight the gender imbalance of my sample. Of the 21 informants, sixteen are male and five are female. However, the gender of the participants is only taken into consideration in cases where it appears relevant to the process of identity construction (e.g., renegotiation of reference roles such as the mother/the carer). In addition, if it is true that, in terms of number, women are fewer than men in my sample, it is also true that, if we consider the actual hours of recording, the female participation is more consistent. Spontaneity and intimacy were estimated to be more valuable factors, and, for this reason, I did not pursue the involvement of other female participants who could jeopardise the naturalness of the events recorded.

#### 4.3.1.3. Ethical concerns

Participants were always aware of the presence of the recorder. Since I aimed to preserve the naturalness of the events, I simply verbally asked participants for their permission to turn on the recorder. In a preliminary phase of the investigation, I asked a few potential participants what they thought about video-recording. Overall, they agreed that audio-recording was better to preserve the naturalness of the events because a video-recorder would have been perceived as too intrusive. The recordings were made using a digital voice recorder (SYNiC 8GB) and the application 'Vocal Memo' was downloaded to my personal iPhone 6S (until September 2016) and, later, to my iPhone 7. Two devices were always recording in order to capture the whole range of conversations realised. Nevertheless, the quality of the iPhone 7 recordings was better and, therefore, I used them to make the transcriptions. However, having two devices was necessary, in particular, when numerous participants were gathered at a single event. I made the decision to only record events involving at least two people and no more than eight.

Before turning on the recorder, I explained to the participants that all the audio files (such as the transcriptions) would be stored on a USB pen-drive accessible only with a password exclusively known by the researcher. Moreover, a copy of the recordings was uploaded to the online program Mendeley, accessible only through a private log-in. When I met the participants for the interviews, I then asked them to sign a consent form and provided an information sheet

(see Appendix A). All the forms are safely stored in a key-locked locker. I guaranteed anonymity, and, for this reason, the names of speakers' workplaces and the names of other people mentioned during the events were omitted from the transcriptions. Participants are identified through pseudonyms. During the natural events, I generally tried not to control the topics covered so I was not able to limit any distress possibly caused by the contents of the conversations decided by the participants. On the other hand, during the interviews, I explained to the interviewees that they were free to avoid questions they did not want to answer and I encouraged them to tell me if any topic was causing them embarrassment or discomfort. The research was carried out by complying with the university's ethical approval process.

#### 4.3.1.4. Describing the participants

Participants are described according to specific social variables that are generally used in sociolinguistic research. Social variables are "aspects of a speaker's social identity (e.g. social class, gender, age or ethnicity) which are correlated with language behaviour" (Swann *et al.*, 2004: *s.v. social variables*). Social variables are only used here to characterise the participants and not to carry out quantitative variationist analyses. Moreover, through the description of the participants, we understand the criteria they had to meet to be involved in the project. This sub-section also shows the super-diversity characterising the sample, and, by extension, the post-2008 wave.

The first classification regards the gender of the participants. Five female (Valentina, Maria, Debora, Cristina, and Alessandra) and sixteen male (Andrea, Matteo, Simone, Alessandro, Marco, Domenico, Stefano, Giovanni, Michele, Daniele, Nicola, Fabio, Federico, Ciro, Giulio, and Lucio) participants were involved. To emphasise, the names of the participants are pseudonyms.

**Table 1. Gender**

| Male | Female |
|---|---|
| 16 | 5 |

The first criterion adopted to select my participants is ethno-linguistic. They must be born in Italy and they had to indicate 'Italian' as their mother tongue. However, the term Italian is an oversimplification. Each of my informants speaks a variety of regional Italian (Berruto, 1987; Cerruti, 2013). Each of these varieties has phonetic, lexical, morphological and syntactic

characteristics which do not, however, prevent mutual understanding and communication between speakers with different origins. Some of the participants occasionally shift towards dialect while others stated they are not able to speak their local dialect. Nevertheless, all of the participants have some passive competence in at least one dialect. Eleven of the participants speak northern varieties of standard Italian. They come from different regions, such as Lombardy (Alessandro, Marco, Maria, Valentina, Alessandra, Giovanni and Federico), Emilia Romagna (Simone), Piedmont (Daniele), Liguria (Fabio), and Veneto (Lucio). Despite some distinctive features, the varieties of Italian spoken by them feature many common characteristics. Three of the informants speak a central variety of Italian, since they come from a region called Marche (Matteo, Andrea and Stefano). Seven participants come from southern regions, such as Sicily (Domenico), Campania (Nicola, Michele, Debora and Ciro) and Puglia (Cristina and Giulio) and, therefore, speak southern varieties of Italian. As already mentioned, mutual comprehension among the new migrants is possible and smooth, but northern and southern varieties present distinct differences (Mengaldo, 1994). All the participants (except for Domenico) who come from the centre and south are also dialectal speakers and, therefore, they use dialect as a performative resource as well.

**Table 2. Regional origin**

| Northern regions | Central regions | Southern regions |
|---|---|---|
| 11 | 3 | 7 |

**Table 3. Varieties of Italian spoken/ Dialects spoken**

| Northern varieties/dialects | Central varieties/dialects | Southern varieties/dialects |
|---|---|---|
| 11 | 3 | 6 |

**Table 4. Regular dialect speakers**

| Yes | No |
|---|---|
| 10 | 11 |

Age is an equally decisive factor upon which inclusion in the present project depended. As in many other migratory flows, the majority of the migrants are young. The age range was decided on the basis of the first set of data which described this new type of migrants, confirmed by Tintori and Romei (2017). Thus, participants had to be aged between 18 and 35 years old in order to be considered representative of the post-2008 crisis wave. The average age of participants is 26, with the oldest participant aged 34 and the youngest 23 (at the time of the first recording). The youth of the participants entails other elements. Instability and unpredictability, typical of young people, is a key factor in the analysis of these migrants' linguistic

practices. Super-diversity and unpredictability are linked concepts (Blommaert, 2012), and the continuous evolution of the studied wave justifies the use of these terms.

Moreover, the marked generational gap as concerns the post-Second World War migrants reinforced the idea of separation between the two groups present in the Italian community in London. It is possible that older post-2008 crisis migrants (aged above 35, moving for instance with their families and less familiar with new technologies) connect more with the network of post-war migrants. On the other hand, younger post-crisis migrants prefer to distance themselves from that network (Scotto, 2015a; 2015b and see section 2.5. for more considerations about the age of Italian migrants and their implications.).

The people involved in the project mostly moved in 2012 or at the beginning of 2013 (fifteen participants). Three migrated between 2008 and 2010 and another three between 2014 and 2016. I included participants who had migrated very recently because I wanted to test their acceptance, sharing, use and learning of the new linguistic norms. However, to be involved in the project, participants had to have been living in London for at least six months.

Social class is another element taken into consideration. Social class is an element important to showing the heterogeneity of the sample. It is also relevant to highlight a major difference between post-war and post-crisis migrants. While post-war migrants are generally presented as poor migrants who joined the working class once they arrived in the UK, not all post-2008 crisis migrants can fit in one category and generalisations are risky. The participants involved in this project belonged to different social classes in the homeland. Some of them claimed they belonged to the upper class and some to the lower middle and working class. This classification is fundamental in the study of the trajectories of these migrants. The social class of origin did not always coincide with the social class participants belong to in the UK. Situating migrants in the British social class system is not a straightforward process. I simplify this concept, classifying the participants on the basis of their job and of their income (in Italy, if they had one and in the UK). However, many other elements can influence one's belonging to a social class and these are not entirely related to the income earned. Social habits, schools attended, recreation and preferred places are all elements that would determine one's belonging to a social class. Migrants do not always fit into this system since they may have their own criteria of social stratification based on different cultural values. For this reason, it is very difficult to identify a migrant's appropriate social class. The interviewed participants also struggled when asked about their social class after the move, yet it was clear to them which social class they belonged to when they were in Italy. In addition, they stressed the changes in their

economic status happened after they moved, by underscoring their belonging to a "social class of migrants" and describing themselves as "impoverished". In some cases, the participants admitted a connection between their change of status and their unsatisfactory - for the job market - knowledge of English.

Since the belonging to a British social class was not so clear, the only evident sub-division presently concerns the job they do in London. Seventeen participants can be described as white-collar workers (financial brokers, economists, analysts, estate agents, doctoral researchers) and four blue-collar workers (two waiters, one cook, and one baker). However, some of those employed in white-collar jobs entered the UK market from a lower position. In fact, when they initially moved to London, they were employed in menial jobs, as they did not speak English. Half of the participants affirmed that their English competence was extremely low at the time of their arrival. This was not in relation to their level of education or their social class.

**Table 5. Type of profession**

| White collar | Blue collar |
|---|---|
| 17 | 4 |

**Table 6. Profession at arrival**

| White collar | Blue collar |
|---|---|
| 13 | 8 |

The level of schooling generally reflects the professional subdivision. Fifteen participants are highly educated (twelve completed an MA and two are PhD candidates studying in the UK), four of them have a secondary school diploma (Andrea, Ciro, Giulio, and Federico), and two completed only primary and secondary school (Matteo and Lucio), dropping formal education when they were sixteen years old.

**Table 7. Good knowledge of English at arrival (self-assessment)**

| Yes | No |
|---|---|
| 10 | 11 |

**Table 8. Level of schooling**

| Primary | Secondary | Higher |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 4 | 15 |

Most of the participants work in culturally mixed environments, excluding the two waiters and the baker who only have Italian or Italian-speaking colleagues. The majority of the

participants share a house with only Italian flatmates, while only seven live in mixed apartments but with at least one other Italian living with them. They all live in different areas of the city.

Turning, finally, to the personal status of the participants, nine of them reported not being in a relationship, while six were in a relationship with Italian partners. Only one participant is married and his wife is also Italian. Three informants do not have Italian-speaking partners and one is in a relationship with a Spanish woman who speaks Italian fluently.

#### 4.3.1.5. Accessing the real language of the participants: the researcher as a friend and natural social events

The main focus of this research is on the everyday language used by post-2008 crisis migrants. Therefore, it seemed obvious that the first issue to consider was the importance of accessing natural and spontaneous examples of everyday language. I am using the term *everyday conversation* or *everyday talk* to describe the communicative events in which speakers use what Labov defines *vernacular*, which is "the style in which the minimum attention is given to the monitoring of speech" (Labov, 1972: 208). An equivalent concept is so-called "casual speech" (Labov, 1972). To study everyday talk, I needed to record situations wherein speakers would feel comfortable and relaxed. With the term *natural events* I mean those situations in which participants did not feel studied and observed since these events happen naturally and often in their daily life. Activities were not planned and complete freedom of action and speech was granted, exactly as it would have happened in any not recorded social gatherings. In addition, as I explain later, I decided to describe these social gatherings as "natural events" because most of the time they were not organised specifically for the research, but they are part of the social habits of my participants and therefore we can say they happen naturally.

In migratory contexts, speakers usually present a vast repertoire of codes (here used as a general term, broader than the word *language*). Speakers are capable of evaluating these codes in order to choose the appropriate one according to the occasion. For decades, the literature on the topic highlighted the presence of one code considered by the migrants as the domestic one, generally used among relatives and close friends (Gumperz, 1982). It is the "'we-code' […] associated with in-group and informal activities" (Gumperz, 1982: 66). This code was considered more spontaneous in comparison with the "they-code" (Gumperz, 1982: 66), usually the language of the host country.

Nevertheless, such a strict subdivision is not always valid, as many studies have shown. Analysing the linguistic repertoire of this project's participants, we note that English and Italian are not so clearly used in one context and excluded from another. Some of the participants have non-native Italian partners and, therefore, for them, this division may not fit, since they must use English in an intimate context. For others, Italian is the language spoken also at work, a formal context in which we would expect increased use of English. In that case, we can hypothesise the use of a higher variety of Italian at work, less regionally or dialectally marked, although this really depends on the professional environment, and on the relations established between co-workers. Moreover, as usually happens in migratory contexts, and as this research confirms, even the variety of Italian used by the new migrants in in-group talks is undergoing changes due to the introduction of language contact phenomena. This variety of Italian that allows for translanguaging may be considered, then, the true "we-code" of the speakers.

For this reason, I decided to record participants' spontaneous conversations, taking place in natural settings. The definition adopted for the term conversation is the one suggested by Abercrombie, who considered conversations "all those linguistic occasions when there is the opportunity for give and take; when it is understood that, at least in theory, there is more than one active participant" (1963: 3). Another important aspect of spontaneous conversation is the absence of a speech plan, and the speakers themselves randomly select the topics covered in this type of conversation. As Sacks *et al.* maintain, "conversation can accommodate a wide range of situations, interactions in which persons in varieties (or varieties of groups) of identities are operating; it can be sensitive to the various combinations; and it can be capable of dealing with a change of situation within a situation" (1974: 699).

My role in those events helped me to overcome one of the most irresolvable problems faced by sociolinguists: the presence of the researcher observing, and therefore affecting, natural situations. This problem is usually called the "Observer's Paradox" (Labov, 1972: 209, capital letters in the original). Labov (1972) affirmed that researchers seek to investigate codes when they are naturally spoken - when no observation is implied. Nonetheless, the only way to study these codes is through observation. The implication of this concept is that researchers must always be aware of the effects of their observation on speakers' language. Researchers should question themselves about the possibility of overcoming the influence of observation. I would argue that, as suggested by Labov himself (1972), the effects related to the Observer's Paradox are not avoidable but they are reducible. For instance, in planning data collection for this research, the decision to position myself as a friend seemed a good tool for reducing the

influence of my observation. The recorder appeared to be generally ignored for most of the recording time, and the vast range of topics discussed during those events supports this claim. As far as I could see, participants did not seem to consciously regulate their speech. When asked about their feelings about being recorded, they generally responded positively. In addition, some of the participants appreciated the presence of an unintrusive device (such an iPhone), maintaining that this helped in forgetting that it was there. Moreover, in the course of the data collection period, I reflected on my position and my behaviour. Initially, I felt the need to pilot the conversations in order to stimulate the occurrence of language contact phenomena by introducing conversation topics linked to the British context (work, international friends, etc.). However, as I said, I never linguistically elicited their production. I was also very careful not to engage in these linguistic practices in order to avoid influencing my data. However, as mentioned, I then realised that this was perceived as unnatural, since my linguistic behaviour had become artificial and too controlled. I therefore preferred to maintain my natural style, which accords with that of my participants. Due to my natural and spontaneous involvement during these events, I decided to include myself in the analysis of the data and to consider myself as an active participant who engages in the negotiation and display of identities. For this reason, as we will see in the following chapter's analyses, when I am a participant in spontaneous conversations extracts, I address myself as 'Giulia'.

Believing that the observation and that the presence of the recorder were totally forgotten by participants can be a mistake. As Wolfson maintains, "we do not have the right to assume that our subjects are unconscious of observation" (1976: 199), although it is easy to fall into the temptation of thinking it. The presence of the recorder was usually remembered by participants themselves, who, in every conversation I recorded, at a certain point, mentioned the device. I have identified two kinds of recorder involvement: the recorder as an intruder, a foreign presence, since it is usually associated with the idea of espionage, and the recorder as a participant (Johnstone, 2000; Wolfson, 1976), used to increase the comic quality of the conversation.

Another technique I used to reduce the effects of observation was based on the selection of the type of events to record. Some of the events were not purposely designed for the research, they were events organised by other participants who invited me, and since the participants had all agreed to be recorded, I decided to use these occasions as natural research settings. I planned two events with a deliberate research purpose, though they appeared to be natural and spontaneous. These situations appeared as normal ways of friends and new acquaintances gathering,

as these kinds of gatherings are very common among post-2008 crisis migrants who generally meet for house dinner parties in order to recreate cultural patterns reminiscent of the homeland. According to Italian culture, food is a core tool to group people. For this reason, I mainly recorded dinners, held at participants' houses, in restaurants, and at my own house. Only on a few occasions was I able to record participants involved in other kinds of recreational activities (such as two participants playing video-games or decorating a Christmas tree). On the contrary, when I conducted the interviews I needed to re-assess my role as researcher in order to obtain the appropriate involvement from the participants.

#### 4.3.2. Triangulation of data: the interviews and thematic analysis

I chose to conduct interviews with three aims in mind. Firstly, to gather personal information about this project's participants to be able, afterwards, to correlate these factors with their linguistic practices. Secondly, to understand their level of awareness of the sociological and linguistic phenomena examined, and, therefore, I used interviews "as a resource for investigating truths, facts, experience, beliefs, attitudes, and/or feelings of the respondents" (Talmy, 2010: 131). Thirdly, to explore the linguistic resources used by post-2008 crisis migrants in situations generally perceived as more formal and controlled. This offered the opportunity to confront the linguistic practices of speakers in at least two different contexts.

If it is true that interviews can be carried out in a relaxed environment which does not particularly affect speakers' behaviour, it is also fundamental to note that interviews are formal speech events, presenting a pre-defined communicational structure. Although the etymology of the word *interview* recalls an exchange of opinions between two persons (Kvale, 2007), when interviews are used as research instruments, interviewers usually avoid replying to or commenting on the respondents' answers. Moreover, while spontaneous conversations are based on the premise of avoiding conversation plans, interviews assume the use of pre-established questions which are asked by the researcher and must be answered by the interviewees.

Nevertheless, in order to avoid excessive communicative constriction, I followed a semi-structured model. According to Dörnyei (2007) and Kvale (2007), in semi-structured interviews respondents are encouraged to answer a list of questions asked by the interviewer, who also allows their participants to diverge from the topics discussed, freely and without restrictions. The list of questions used for this project can be found in Appendix B. This list was developed after carrying out a preliminary thematic analysis on the data collected during natural events. Thematic analysis is an analytical technique widespread in social science studies. It

involves the coding of data on the basis of "emerging themes, trends, patterns, or conceptual categories" (Pavlenko, 2007: 166). For the present study, I underscored the most common themes in relation to the speakers' engagement with translanguaging. I therefore created a list of questions which promoted discussions on themes that had regularly emerged in the spontaneous conversations recorded. It seemed impossible to tightly structure interviews, which were generally carried out in a group setting (with a maximum of four interviewees per time). As Milroy and Gordon (2003) suggest, this kind of interview allows participants to feel more comfortable and less constrained by the formality of the situation. One of the major issues considered in the literature concerns the level of formality that a sociolinguistic interview should have. Wolfson (1982) and Labov (1981) suggest opposite points of view on the topic. The argument is summarised by Milroy, who maintains:

> Wolfson (1982) has criticized Labov's suggestion that fieldworkers make interviews as informal as possible by adopting a position of 'lower authority and lesser consequence in the conversation' (Labov, 1981:15). She argues that this is likely to lead to confusion, embarrassment and even hostility, since interviewees expect interviewers to ask them a series of clear questions (1987: 47).

The right balance between formality and informality must be acquired, in order to succeed with this method, especially for a combined type of interview. Informality may be a positive tool for linguists, but an uncertain feature for sociologists. Learning from my experience, not only can participants spoil an interview due to a lack of formality and structure, but also interviewers themselves may not be able to be perfectly conscious of their objectives if they try to be excessively informal.

This project's participants are part of the so called "interview society" (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997), which is a concept used to describe the total acceptance of interviews in common western contemporary culture. They were thus aware of the implications necessitated by this kind of event. However, being aware of the rules of interviewing does not immediately mean being confident in the role of an interviewee. In fact, informants appeared to be slightly worried about this approach, while usually seeming comfortable with the use of the recorder during the naturally occurring events.

Another aspect must be taken into consideration when analysing the answers of the respondents. Participants may answer providing "socially desirable" responses (Bradburn, 1983: 72). Analysing the scale suggested by Marlowe and Crowne about social desirability (Crowne

and Marlowe, 1964, in Bradburn, 1983), Bradburn explains that informants, completing questionnaires, are most likely going to choose the most "socially desirable" answers, especially if they feel the need to be accepted by the interviewer and by the rest of society. We can see that the same attitude applies not only in sociological but also in linguistic research. In some cases, I had the impression that the informants were keen to please me or that they wanted to 'prove' their linguistic skills. I would maintain that, during some interviews I carried out, it was possible to identify the informants' willingness to utter not only socially, but also linguistically desirable responses based on what they thought I would want to discover through my research. However, I believe that even these episodes were relevant to understanding speakers' linguistic practices and their ability to display a full range of identities and so this is not necessarily a weakness of the research.

Overall, these interviews provide data which can go some way to answering the research questions regarding the participants' point of view and their perspective on the phenomena investigated. As I said, the preliminary analysis of the initial data collected (both initial recordings and the first interviews) influenced the second phase of interviews carried out after June 2017. In the preliminary analysis of the data, I thematically categorised the topics linked to their migratory experience that seemed relevant for the participants and the episodes in which translanguaging practices were deployed. I therefore re-structured the interviews with the purpose of obtaining a deeper insight into specific aspects that emerged in the conversations and the interviews recorded previously.

Usually, the participants showed a high level of awareness of the phenomena discussed, and they provide interesting reflections on their migratory situations, which, in turn, influenced this project. For instance, participants challenged the idea of *community*, showing themselves to be resistant to theoretically imposed groupings. Moreover, the participants suggested functions of the languages involved in the multilingual practices they engage with and they reflected on their attitudes towards Italian, English, and dialects, and on the contact between these languages. This element was then relevant to understanding the uses of speakers' translanguaging practices in the dateset.

The interviews were then analysed following different steps. Firstly, I thematically analysed them, highlighting narratives (Pavlenko, 2007) and discourses shared by the interviewees. As Pavlenko (2007) highlights, thematic analysis may present some weaknesses which can be overcome by including other levels of analysis and relating the emerging themes to relevant

theoretical frameworks. I therefore triangulated the data by highlighting the connection between the multilingual practices participants engaged with and their reflections suggested in the interviews. I related each speaker's linguistic practices to their attitudes and beliefs regarding the changes in their language repertoire in order to draw a complete sociolinguistic profile of each informant. I then used the information collected in the interviews and through my ethnographic observation to corroborate the analysis of participants' translanguaging practices. Such triangulation of diverse pieces of data helped to add robustness to my conclusions regarding migrants' linguistic practices. As explained in section 1.2., 1.3. and 3.1.[16], my study is informed by the principles of interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith and Osborn, 2003). It is difficult to assess the validity of results in a study which relies on an interpretative lens. For this reason, I triangulated different type of data in order to reach solid conclusions.

## 4.4. Transcription and translation

The most concrete product of this research project is a dataset formed of twenty-four hours of recorded spontaneous conversations and six hours of interviews. Thus, we have a dataset of 170,000 words (40,000 from the interviews and 130,000 from the natural events). The dataset is mainly in spoken Italian. Several regional elements and dialectal shifts are present. English is the least used language (as expected, since I recorded only in-group talks with only native Italian speakers). All the recordings were transcribed. For my transcriptions, I followed the principles of Conversation Analysis (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990), although I only did a CA informed analysis, since I did not focus on elements such as turn-taking organisation. Segments were also analysed following the principles of Discourse Analysis (Ballinger and Payne, 2000). Some micro-analytical features, such as pauses, were taken into consideration to understand and evaluate speakers' reactions and attitudes towards multilingual practices. For instance, in analysing the dataset, I focused on pauses and self-corrections, realised before translingual items in order to reflect on participants' awareness of their engagement with translanguaging and on the naturalness of such realisations. I only used the elements of CA transcriptions which seemed useful to make considerations on speakers' linguistic behaviour, by discarding the irrelevant ones, which could have made transcriptions difficult to read. The transcription conventions are listed below:

<.> one second pause

[16] Epistemological considerations were discussed in different sections. They were placed in these sections instead of the methodology chapter, since this seemed necessary to understand my literature review choices.

<..> two second pause

<…> longer pause

[overlapping

[contextualisation]

? questioning tone

! exclamation/raising of tone

*italic* non-standard Italian words (dialectal or mispronounced)

***bold italic*** English insertions, loanwords and loanshifts

: elongation of sound

** omitted names of people involved and not involved in project or workplaces

+++ unintelligible recording

/IPA/ International Phonetic Alphabet transcription

**Segment sample**

| Line | Speaker's pseudonym | Original discourse transcription | English translation |
|---|---|---|---|

As Bucholtz (2000) highlights, every process of transcription is characterised by a certain level of subjectivity and researchers are guided by their own academic backgrounds in the choices they make. Davidson specifies that "transcription is not merely the mechanical selection and application of notation symbols. Instead, researchers make choices" (2009: 38). Since the main focus of this research is on spontaneous oral discourse, I opted for a "denaturalized transcription" which "may make speech itself seem alien" since it is most faithful to oral discourses (Bucholtz, 2000: 1461). This kind of transcription is, for me, the best available style to show the spontaneity of the recordings in this project, since it shows the features of spoken discourse (repetitions, self-corrections, reformulation, pauses, intonations, elongation of sounds). Both the natural events and the interviews were transcribed in accordance with this decision. Moreover, I included "nonstandard spelling" (Bucholtz, 2000: 1456) since I believe that it is important to present spoken language truthfully and faithfully, and, as a sociolinguist, I greatly value linguistic variation that diverts from the standardised norm. IPA conventions and transcriptions have been used when necessary to explain non-standard realisations. Elements of spoken Italian and non-standard Engish have been transcribed following this technique (see segment 33 for instance).

### 4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I explained my methodological choices and their applications. After having justified my preference for a qualitative approach, I introduced the techniques adopted to provide robustness to the present project. Ethnographic observation, involving the recording of a sample of new migrants, yielded a dataset of natural and spontaneous conversations which I analysed thematically afterwards. Some extracts of this dataset were chosen for in-depth analysis, which provided preliminary answers to the research questions. The first interviews and the participants' considerations led then to the second phase of the research. I decided to focus on some themes that emerged from the first interviews. This resulted in a re-formulation of some initial hypotheses and in the re-positing of theoretical and analytical frameworks traditionally adopted in Italian migration studies. The combination of different analytical techniques appeared fruitful for the comprehensive understanding of a newly emerged group. Moreover, the present project shows the criticality of the lack of dialogue between different disciplines. To fully understand the sociolinguistic dynamics of the post-crisis wave, an appropriate and broad perspective was needed and, therefore, several methodological tools were exploited in the undertaking of this thesis. In the following chapter, we see the application of the techniques and theoretical frameworks explained in the sections above.

# Chapter 5. Translanguaging practices in a late modern migrant community

## 5. Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected for this research. The analysis discusses the linguistic practices of a sample of post-2008 crisis migrants in relation to the development and negotiation of new identities informed by the migration (sections 5.3. and 5.4.) and identities developed in contrast to other non-migrant speakers (section 5.6.). The dataset was preliminary analysed to classify extracts in which participants used different languages. These episodes were then analysed thematically (5.1. and see section 4.3.2. for references on thematic analysis) in order to highlight the common themes which triggered participants' multilingual practices. The most common themes and sub-themes are discussed in the sections and sub-sections of this chapter. The analysis is based on the application of the translanguaging framework (see section 3.6. for references), which I considered valid to understand the multilingual practices of these group of speakers. Participants' translingual practices are the result of their stories as migrants, their background, their relation with other members of the community, and even their ideologies and beliefs. As I will explain in section 6.3., any essentialist approach based on named languages (Otheguy *et al.*, 2015) would have failed to show the complexity of participants' multilingual realisations and would have distracted from elements essential for the participants. I decided to postpone the discussion on the validity of the application of the translanguaging framework to Chapter 6, since I believe it will be clearer after the presentation of my data.

As mentioned, this theoretical framework has not been applied often to this type of migration contexts so far, since translanguaging has been mainly studied in educational contexts (see 3.6.1.). Therefore, I want to stress here my understanding of *translanguaging* as the linguistic expression of migrants' transnational existence. Late modern migrants live in an extremely global world and their daily experiences place them fluidly into many separate socio-cultural environments. Moreover, every contemporary migrant seems to live migration on an individual level and, therefore, their linguistic repertoire is the result of their personal history and of a personal thinking and development process. Translanguaging is the personal exploitation of the resources at speakers' disposal to make sense of the new socio-cultural environments where speakers live (Backer, 2011; García and Li Wei, 2014; Li Wei, 2011). When I use the term *translanguaging*, I imply an attention to the merging of resources as an expression of indexical meanings (see 3.2.1.for definitions and references) and as a linguistic witness of

speakers' history, socio-cultural background and new mindset. As we will understand in section 5.5., translingual items have indexical meanings, since they refer (index) to features of speakers' personal history - shared and understood by other migrants - or of participants' socio-cultural background.

The translanguaging framework is in line with the post-structuralist, anti-essentialist perspective that permeates my work (see section 3.1. for the definitions of these terms) and it better suits the study of migrants in the act of creating and negotiating the meaning of *community* in late modernity (see 3.3.2. for the literature review on migrant communities in late modernity). In this chapter, I define what I call *disavowed community*. This term can only be explained after the presentation of some data which show how the members of this community challenge its existence and deny their membership of it. Since I chose to study an ongoing phenomenon, I need to respect the instability characterising this group, which is still working on the values and potential of its multilingual practices within the context of such disavowed community. As argued in 5.5. and 5.5.1., ideologies and attitudes towards these practices are still negotiated by the members of the post-2008 crisis wave. In section 5.6. and 5.6.1., I present data where we can observe as some of these ideologies prevent the speakers from deploying all their linguistic resources in some contexts and with unknown interlocutors. Translanguaging is the expression of a changed set of socio-cultural values that migrants develop in contrast to those who have not experienced migration, and this determines participants' rules on the uses of translanguaging.

### 5.1. Analysis of the themes

The purpose of the thematic analysis (theorised in 4.3.2.) was to explore the relation between the topics the participants discuss and the realisation of translanguaging. The thematic analysis of speakers' spontaneous translingual instances highlighted the processes of new identities' negotiation and performance. Such a thematic analysis guided me in the development of the interview procedure and structure. I then embarked on a process of relating the two types of data, establishing a reciprocal and bidirectional analytical and interpretive process. Therefore, the reflexive extracts (from the interviews) contribute to the interpretation of speakers' linguistic practices, although, in those, participants usually avoided translanguaging. I summarise the thematic areas in which translanguaging practices are deployed as follows:

i) job-related topics (which lead to the display of professional identities) - discussed in section 5.3;

ii) everyday life matters (which lead to the negotiation and display of adult personas) - discussed in section 5.4.;

iii) linguistic development and reflection on in-group style - discussed in section 5.5.;

iv) othering (host country and internal othering) - discussed in section 5.6.

Before I proceed with the explanation of these thematic areas, I need to highlight two important and interconnected elements characterising this new group of migrants: the refusal of traditional grouping criteria - the ethnic/national bond - and the challenge of pre-imposed migrant community dynamics. This section represents the backdrop to my linguistic analysis, as it presents the novelty of this wave through one of the most relevant aspects my participants identified.

**5.2. The disavowed community**

The post-2008 crisis migrants who arrive in London continue an ancient migratory tradition. Although the post-Second World War Italian London community was not as numerically important as others in the UK, it was, and still is, a well-established community. This community spread in the Clerkenwell area, close to Farringdon Station, and its heart is St. Peter Church (Fortier, 2006). The church sponsored card clubs and dancing clubs, in its role of the social gatherer for the older generation of migrants. In the same area, we find historical Italian delicatessens, crowded on Sundays after the mass conducted in Italian. Catholic celebrations, such as the parade of the statue of the Lady of Mount Carmel, still have an important function for the post-war wave and for their children. In these contexts, Italian migratory socio-cultural practices were nourished, strengthened, and shared at a community level (Fortier, 1999; 2006). As it happens in many other cases, the chain system that usually characterises migrations (MacDonald and MacDonald, 1964) allowed these centres to grow and to establish their role for the community, while for the contemporary migration I noted a different trend.

My study suggests that post-2008 crisis migrants do not see these places as points of reference. From what emerged discussing with my participants, the new generation of Italian migrants does not engage with these socio-cultural spaces. When the new migrants arrive in London, they do not search for the historical Italian community since they seem not recognise the role of the places that were the centre of the community for the previous generation. None of my project's participants were even aware of the presence of an Italian neighbourhood in London and of all the activities connected to it. They freely admitted their lack of awareness of the traditional rituals of the Italian community and showed indifference to the socio-cultural

practices - religious practices, everyday habits, social spaces, media and communication forms - promoted by the previous generations. It is important to specify here that the Italian neighbourhood only served as a community centre, but Italians have always lived spread out allover London. In the 1980s and 1990s, many Italians who migrated to London belonged to the upper classes (Tubito and King, 1996), and they preferred to live in other areas. However, these migrants kept a relationship to the historical Italian area creating, for instance, social clubs, such as the “Casa Italiana San Vincenzo Pallotti”, situated next to the Italian church as a cultural association that promotes Italy in the UK. Informants admit their unawareness about these centres. Only one participant who accompanied me to the annual parade of the Lady of Mount Carmel statue, described that experience as the first time she discovered the existence of community places and newspapers, while other participants denied their interest in these forms of communication.

If we address this as a global generational phenomenon, we cannot dismiss so easily the distance informants keep from contemporary forms of social engagement (such as social media networks). Other pieces of research on the new Italian mobility in the UK (and around the world) and its use of new technology showed that such social network groups substituted for more traditional forms of social gathering (Seganti, 2010). However, the participants in this project also reject this association, denying their association with social media groups aimed at Italians in London. This firmly claimed distance from the historical community places and practices, and even from contemporary social practices, suggests that the new Italian migrants reject any and all community dynamics (past and present). As we will now see, this is only the first signal of a change in perspective on the concept of community. The participants also show an individualistic attitude, which informs their migratory experience, and that leads to the challenge of the existence to the community itself.

### 5.2.1. A new community or a new definition of community?

This part of the investigation indicates that contemporary Italian migrants prefer to establish new grouping criteria, since previous ones are contested. When asked about their sense of belonging, many participants started with a reconceptualisation of the notion of *community*, actively rephrasing the concept. While some participants were doubtful about the existence of the Italian community, others preferred a more critical approach. By taking into consideration my informants’ perspectives on the idea of community, I was able to comprehend the grouping criteria important for these new migrants, in contrast with the traditional community dynamics mentioned in Italian migration studies (reviewed in Chapter 2). The participants proved able to

distinguish and underscore nuances in the understanding of the notion of *community* (theoretically discussed in 3.3.1 and 3.3.2), showing their need for a new thinking on the ontology of national community. This process emerges in Alessandra’s words, in segment 1. Alessandra is a northern Italian participant who moved to London in 2013. She is highly educated but when she arrived she worked as sale assistant for one year since she did not feel confident in her ability to speak English.

**Segment 1. On the ontology of community**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Giulia | secondo te esiste la comunità italiana a Londra? | in your opinion does the Italian London community exist? |
| 03<br>04<br>05 | Alessandra | e:::::m::: <..> comunità intendi nel ricreare una piccola Italia? | e:::::m::: <..> for community do you mean recreating a little Italy? |
| 06<br>07<br>08 | Giulia | qualsiasi cosa ti venga in mente pensando all’idea di comunità | anything you can think of if you think about the idea of community |
| 09<br>10<br>11<br>12 | Alessandra | sì dai sicuramente c’è una comunità a Londra <.> quanto sia positiva quanto sia negativa non lo so però c’è | yes there is surely a community in London <.> how positive or negative this is I don’t know though but there is |
| 13<br>14<br>15<br>16 | Giulia | in senso:: inteso come gruppo? o inteso come persone che hanno le stesse abitudini? che vanno negli stessi posti? | I mea::n do you mean as a group? or do you mean people who have the same habits? who go to the same places? |
| 17<br>18<br>19<br>20<br>21<br>22 | Alessandra | inteso come gruppo <..> inteso come abitudini sì credo stessi posti alcune cose tipo:: cucinare cibo italiano mangiare a un certo orario quindi mantenere quello che facevi prima | I mean as a group <..> I mean as habits yes I believe so same places some things a::s cooking Italian food eating at a certain time so keeping what you used to do before |
| 23<br>24 | Giulia | ok e tu ti senti parte di questa comunità? | ok and do you feel part of this community? |
| 25<br>26<br>27<br>28<br>29<br>30<br>31<br>32 | Alessandra | e::m:: no sinceramente <..> sinceramente no <..> m:: se i miei amici possono considerarsi piccola comunità sì però ripeto sono persone:: non il classico italiano a Londra quindi:: però sì comunità come forma di gruppo | e::m:: no honestly <..> honestly no <..> m:: if my friends can be considered a small community yes but I repeat they are people:: they are not the typical Italian in London so:: but yes there is a community as a form of group |

Since my investigation had highlighted a lack of involvement by the participants with national community practices, I started asking the informants' opinions about their community belonging and about their understanding of *Italian community*. Before providing an answer, Alessandra asks for clarification, assigning me the role of expert and of person who is supposed to lead the conversation (lines[17] 03-04). However, she does not randomly enquire about the meaning of community, but she mentions a common image for Italian migration. In line 04, she says "piccola Italia", a little Italy. As we saw in section 2.3.2, Italian migrants generally settled in neighbourhoods, or sometimes in a few streets, recreating the life of the homeland. Those agglomerations are called *little Italies* (Gabaccia, 2006). Since I did not want to constrain the participant, I reply opening up the possibilities (lines 06-08) and this seemed to empower Alessandra. She starts by claiming the existence of "an" Italian community (line 09). It must be noted that while I use the definite article (*la*, "the", in line 01), Alessandra opts for an indefinite article, as the nature of this community has not been defined yet. Moreover, she admits the existence of such a community, introducing it through the allusion to a negative judgment (lines 10-12). At this point, I return to her initial query, suggesting a few options to help me understand her idea of community (lines 13-16). Accepting one of my suggestions, she initially agrees with the idea of national community as a group of people with the same habits and who engage in the same social practices (simplified with "who go to the same places", line 19). However, in explaining this notion, Alessandra shifts to cultural habits that do not specifically link the community members to any specific place. She refers to a cultural community while dismissing its social habits. She mentions the practice of cooking Italian food and of eating at conventional hours, aligning with the Italian tradition of giving great importance to meals. In lines 21 and 22, she suggests that the Italian community is characterised by the effort to maintain the cultural rituals of the homeland. Nevertheless, as we read a few lines below, a lack of changes and the intention of perpetrating the same cultural habits are not positively evaluated. In fact, Alessandra denies that she belongs to this national community by proposing a different membership (lines 27-28). As we read in the review of Antaki and Widdicombe's (1998) work, membership is fluid and can be negotiated through discourse practices. Her group of friends becomes the only community she is happy to admit she belongs to - only because they are different from the "typical Italian" who, we will see, is disliked by other participants as well. Alessandra introduces a different grouping criterion to create distance from a national group she does not want to be associated with. Interestingly, all the participants followed a similar

[17] Line numbers in the analyses refer to the transcription of the original conversations in Italian.

pattern. In the following segment, the (unconscious) introduction of the concept of imagined community (Anderson, 2006) is remarkable. Here we see Maria, a migrant who moved in 2015 immediately after she graduated in Italy. She works as analyst for a big American company.

**Segment 2. The entity**[18]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03 | Giulia | secondo te fai vita di comunità? sei parte di una comunità qui a Londra? | do you think you do community life? are you part of a community here in London? |
| 04<br>05<br>06<br>07 | Maria | e::m::: pf:: allora beh un po' perchè va beh ci sono le cose del movimento e quindi in fondo quello è un u::n::' appartenenza comunitaria | e::m::: pf:: so well a bit because well there are the things of the movement and so after all that is a a::: community belonging |
| 08<br>09 | Giulia | però è un'appartenenza comunitaria di nicchia | but that's a niche community be-longing |
| 10<br>11<br>12 | Maria | sì esatto sì:: no di appartenere alla comunità italiana no | yes exactly ye::s no I don't feel I belong to the Italian community no |
| 13<br>14 | Giulia | secondo te esiste una comunità italiana a Londra? | in your opinion does an Italian London community exist? |
| 15<br>16<br>17<br>18<br>19<br>20<br>21<br>22 | Maria | probabilmente c'è e::: però non mi sembra veramente di farne parte cioè il fatto è che gli italiani fanno comunque un po' gruppo a sé in ogni caso cioè io lo noto dalla reazione dei miei colleghi tendenzialmente cioè loro percepiscono gli italiani comunque come una sorta di entità | probably there is a::nd but I don't think I really belong to it I mean the fact that the Italians group an-yway I mean I notice this from my colleagues' reaction usually I mean they perceive the Italians anyway as a sort of entity |
| 23<br>24 | Giulia | quindi lo stereotipo? che a volte ci sta anche | so is that the stereotype? that sometimes can be true |
| 25<br>26<br>27<br>28<br>29<br>30 | Maria | sì o anche molto più::: e:::m cioè ci caratterizzano per certe cose che sono anche delle stupidate cioè tipo può essere il modo di parlare una certa gestualità o anche un modo di essere | yes or even much mo::re e:::m I mean they characterise us for maybe silly things I mean like it can be the way we talk our body language or even the way of being |
| 31 | Giulia | cioè noi sembriamo più gruppo:? | so do we look more like a grou:p? |
| 32 | Maria | [sì | [yes |

[18] According to the Macmillan Dictionary, *entity* means "a separate unit that is complete and has its own character" (Macmillan Dictionary: *s.v.* entity). For this reason, I decided to use this word to translate the Italian word *entità*, used by the participant to indicate the image of the Italian community as a unit the participant's colleagues per-ceive to be real and concrete and existing in opposition to other communities.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 33 | Giulia | agli occhi degli altri? | in the eyes of others? |
| 34<br>35<br>36<br>37 | Maria | sì sì però va beh <.> però io non so se appartengo a una comunità italiana non lo so non mi sembra in verità | yes yes but well <.> but I don't know if I belong to an Italian community I don't know it doesn't look like it actually |

The interviewer and the participant start reflecting on the social life of the community. Note that I specifically do not mention the national community this time as I seek to explore Maria's social activities in relation to any kind of community belonging. Maria is member of a religious group (called by its members *il movimento*, line 05), which she immediately mentions, by maintaining her "community belonging" (lines 06-07). After I characterise this belonging as niche (line 09), Maria introduces the idea of Italian community. As much as she was keen to state her affiliation to her religious community, she quickly denies her membership to the Italian community. Although the religious group was founded in Italy and is mainly formed of Italian people, the two communities contrast in Maria's words. Belonging to the Italian community is interpreted as an imposed affiliation that every participant felt the need to contest in some way. Maria restates her non-belonging in lines 15 and 16, after hesitantly admitting the existence of the community. She maintains that the Italian community may exist since Italians are seen as a group by outsiders (lines 21-22) - by the British or by members of other communities in London - but this contrasts with her own feeling. Theoretically, this phrasing alludes to an extremely key concept: the imagined community (see 3.3.1.). As James *et al*. (2012, in Li Wei, 2018b) explain, nations are par excellence an example of imagined community. Membership to the national group is not grass-rooted. Instead, national grouping is an illusory feeling members of nations develop based on the idea of national shared traits and customs. In this particular case, other people, externals, determine the existence of the Italian community. Her colleagues in her international team address the Italians as an entity, as a people able to group easily. In lines 25-30, Maria provides an explanation. According to her, the group is identified due to a particular socio-cultural behaviour. It is interesting to note, however, that even on this occasion the Italian group is characterised by traits linked to the homeland - hand gestures, the way of being, the vocal pitch (lines 28, 29 and 30) - and not by socio-cultural practices developed in London. As in Alessandra's case, the Italian people are described as a group but not as a London community. The only participant who linked the Italian community to a London aspect is Lucio. However, as we see in the below segment, Lucio reverses the image provided by the Italian media and scholars (see section 2.5.) by providing a more personal presentation of the community.

**Segment 3. The waiter**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Giulia | ho capito <.> secondo te la<br>comunità italiana a Londra esiste? | I understood <.> in your opinion does<br>the Italian London community exist? |
| 03 | Lucio | certo | sure |
| 04 | Giulia | in che senso? | what do you mean? |
| 05<br>06<br>07<br>08<br>09<br>10<br>11<br>12 | Lucio | esiste perchè nonostante noi non<br>siamo quelli più <.> meno <.><br>scusa meno propensi a<br>socializzare con chi viene da altri<br>paesi comunque molto spesso<br>ovviamente e come è anche<br>normale che sia i gruppi di italiani<br>si formano molto facilmente | it exists because although we are not<br>the most <.> less <.> sorry less keen<br>to socialise with people coming from<br>other countries anyway very often as<br>it is normal Italian groups are created<br>easily |
| 13<br>14<br>15<br>16<br>17<br>18<br>19 | Giulia | per te comunità è inteso come<br>largo gruppo che fa tutto insieme?<br>e tutti fanno le stesse cose <.> o<br>comunità intesa come persone<br>che si raggruppano su base<br>etnica? cioè tu ti senti parte di una<br>comunità più estesa? | for you is community understood as a<br>large group that does everything to-<br>gether? and everybody does the same<br>things <.> or community as people<br>who group on an ethnic basis? I mean<br>do you feel part of a larger commu-<br>nity? |
| 20<br>21<br>22<br>23<br>24<br>25<br>26<br>27<br>28<br>29<br>30<br>31<br>32<br>33 | Lucio | no! io non mi sento parte di<br>nessuna comunità a Londra <.> e<br>non mi interessa neanche far<br>parte di una comunità italiana <.><br>però se devo guardare con gli<br>occhi di una persona non di parte<br>ho risposto sì perchè quando parli<br>della comunità italiana a Londra ti<br>viene in mente un italiano che fa il<br>cameriere e poco altro quindi<br>sembra quasi che come gli indiani<br>che vengono in Italia da noi fanno<br>i:: venditori di fiori e sono<br>quindi::::: | no! I don't feel part of any community<br>in London <.> and I don't even care to<br>be part of an Italian community <.><br>but if I have to look with the eyes of<br>an impartial person I answered yes<br>because when you talk about the Ital-<br>ian community in London you think<br>about an Italian who works as a<br>waiter and little more so it looks like<br>the Indian people who come to Italy<br>in our country and work a:::s rose<br>sellers and they are so::::: |
| 34 | Giulia | [etichettati? | [labelled? |
| 35<br>36<br>37<br>38<br>39<br>40<br>41<br>42<br>43 | Lucio | etichettati esatto per quel tipo di<br>lavoro noi siamo agli occhi degli<br>inglesi o agli occhi di tante<br>persone straniere etichettati<br>come i camerieri o comunque<br>come quelli che fanno la<br>manodopera più bassa a Londra<br>anche se effettivamente ci sono<br>sicuramente i casi in cui l'italiano | labelled exactly for that kind of job in<br>the eyes of English people or in the<br>eyes of many other foreign people we<br>are labelled as waiters or those who<br>have the lowest menial jobs in Lon-<br>don even though there are surely<br>cases where the Italian is truly appre-<br>ciated and awarded for important<br>things |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 44<br>45 | | viene apprezzato e premiato per cose importanti | |

According to Lucio, Italians are keen to form groups, and this is a clue to the existence of the Italian community. He admits a particular characteristic of the Italian people, sociability, hence promoting the idea of a non-isolated community. This aligns with the sociological studies carried out in the last ten years on the new Italian mobility (Conti, 2012; Scotto, 2015a; 2015b; King *et al.*, 2016) which stress new migrants' tendency to socialise with other migrants coming from socio-culturally similar countries (Spain, France, Greece, and Portugal, mainly). However, Lucio, in line 05, firmly maintains the existence of an Italian community (characterised as an imagined community nonetheless) due to the resemblance in employment of its members. I tried to elicit more information on the understanding of *community*. The outcome of this elicitation is extremely relevant, as, for the first time, I obtain a connection between a stereotyped image (the typical Italian, line 28) and London. To be more precise, Lucio plays the role of the expert and of the outsider. From line 20 to line 23, he claims his absolute non-belonging to the national group, stating, in addition, his lack of interest in claiming any membership. In Lucio's words, we see an example of what King describes as "*individualised* migration" (2017: 12, italics in original), characterised by the migrants' refusal of accepting societal restraining structures. In lines 24-25, Lucio explicitly assumes the voice of an external person being questioned on a case he is able to analyse owing to his closeness but also his impartial judgement. He uses the words "gli occhi di una persona non di parte"- "the eyes of an impartial person". Therefore, Lucio is taking the point of view of someone else, not his own - someone who is not biased and who can recall a stereotypical image to depict this community. As I have already indicated, the important aspect in Lucio's declaration is his introduction of the idea of the typical Italian who works as waiter. Contrary to the idea put forward by the Italian media, Lucio describes this community as formed of people working in low paid sectors, and he uses the symbolic image of the waiter to link the Italian people to a specific professional area, hospitality. To strengthen his claim, he suggests a simile. He notes that - in Italy - other groups, such as the Indian national group, undergo the same stereotypical process. The Italian community is representable by the waiter as much as the Indian community in Italy is stereotypically connoted by the transient vendors who sell flowers in restaurants and on street corners. Clearly, Lucio is not delineating the Italian community as an elite community, he describes it in a negative dimension. Lucio concludes his analysis of the idea of community by introducing the opinion of others, and, in particular, of the host country's people (lines 35-37).

Only in the last two lines does Lucio show some compassion towards the national group he is supposed to belong to by also admitting the existence of an elite sub-section in the group. He thus introduces doubt as regards the possibility of generalising the constituency of such a wave.

Noteworthy in this segment is the physical positioning of the imagined community in London. In addition, the participant, like all the others, strongly denies his belonging to the community despite the admission of its existence. It is important to clarify that the concept of *disavowed community* implies the rejection of membership, but not always the exact denial of the presence of a community, which did, however, occur in some interviews. In section 3.3.2., I also reflected on the notion of non-community since migrant communities in late modernity seem to be something different from traditional migrant communities. As a consequence of the rejection of belonging, of the internal super-diversity, and of the process of internal othering, I theorise that the investigated community is a non-community, a community that challenges itself and which is disavowed by its members.

In this specific case, the denial may be motivated by two factors. Lucio is a migrant who arrived in London without knowing English and, therefore, he could only be employed in menial professions that do not require contact with the public. He was employed as a kitchen porter while he attended English classes, since he saw the English language as a resource to improve his prospects in life. Lucio associates his career progress with the improvement of his linguistic skills. We could hypothesise that, due to his past as a hospitality worker, he assumes this external position in order to underscore his advancement in the host country. In addition, Lucio comes from the north of Italy. For some post-crisis migrants, regional belonging is still stronger than national belonging. In the spontaneous conversation recorded immediately after his interview, Lucio expresses his criticism of the lack of professionalism of a large majority of southern Italians, stressing their difference from himself and his professional values. Therefore, I would suggest that an ethnically and nationally based affiliation would not be coherent with his ideas. The denial of belonging to the Italian community starts from a rejection of the historically accepted grouping criterion: the ethnic and national one. In the following section, the reasons for and the expression of such a challenge are discussed.

### 5.2.2. Defining and contesting Italianness

In recent decades, scholars have argued at length about the concepts of nation, nationality and national identity (Guibernau, 2004; Cameron, 1999; Williams, 1999). As already anticipated in sub-section 3.4.1. regarding Britishness, even the ontology of *Italianness* cannot be

simply explained. In particular, owing to Italian history, the Italian national character has always been a nebulous and blurry idea. For centuries, Italy was divided into small autonomous states, and, in some cases, aristocratic families only reigned over one city (Gentile, 2014). For centuries, foreign powers dominated the country, leaving traces in Italian socio-political and economic assets. Due to such historical fragmentation, regional differences are evident in contemporary Italy (Felice, 2012). These are then transplanted into a common attitude defined as *campanilism*.[19] Italians generally stress their regional origin as much as their national one, since this seems to determine important socio-cultural differences (see 2.1. and 2.5. for the literature on Italian regional differences and for a reflection on post-2008 crisis wave internal diversity). In some cases, this attitude is so strong as to influence Italian migrants' grouping behaviour. It is fundamental to highlight such an aspect here, because, sociologically and linguistically, each Italian migrant can opt for a different nuance of national identity to perform. In understanding Italian migrants' transnationalism, we need to acknowledge the variety of Italian socio-cultural national characters. A participant coming from an urban area in the north of Italy will not have exactly the same cultural background of a migrant from a rural area in the south. Regional differences emerged in many natural conversations recorded in the present study. When discussing regionalism, the informants often mixed a series of elements: level of education, social class, cultural behaviour, and regional character. In the segment below, we see Alessandra continuing her reconceptualisation of the Italian community based on cultural and regional differences. The conversation below happened after carrying out her interview when other participants joined us for dinner.

**Segment 4. Many groups in one community**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05 | Alessandra | tornando al discorso di Giulia<br>probabilmente la comunità<br>italiana c'è però poi ci sono<br>altri gruppi a livello di valori:: a<br>livello di cultura e:: | if we go back to what Giulia said<br>probably the Italian community<br>exists but then there are other<br>groups at a value:::s and cultural<br>level a::nd |
| 06 | Lucio | [ovvio | [obviously |

[19] *Campanilism* indicates Italians' strong attachment to the region or territory of origin.

| 07<br>08<br>09<br>10<br>11<br>12<br>13<br>14<br>15<br>16 | Alessandra | è così perchè quando ad esempio G** dice andiamo all'***Aperifamily*** ok ci potrò anche andare una volta e fare la serata ignorante ma a parte quello non posso neanche sopportare di parlare con una persona che potrebbe frequentare quel posto cioè non *c'ho* argomenti | it's like this because when for instance G** says let's go to the ***Aperifamily*** ok I could even go once and have a silly night but apart from that I cannot even stand to talk with a person who hangs out in that place I mean I *don't have* topics in common |
|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | Lucio | [esatto | [exactly |

In line 01, Alessandra connects her reflection to my interest in the Italian community. The participant contrasts the whole community with several other groups which form on the basis of values and culture (lines 04 and 05). Owing to the common ethnic and national background, we could be tempted to think that all Italian people feel bounded by (at least) the same culture. The participants involved in this project, though, contested such a simplistic vision by stressing internal diversity, and, I would claim, the internal super-diversity (Blommaert and Varis, 2011) that affects the post-crisis wave. In this segment, we see how not only traditional factors of diversity can be taken into consideration, such as social class or education, but also more abstract elements, such as values or culture. For Alessandra, these many sub-groups develop within the community and they are a result of its profound heterogeneity. The example she suggests is noteworthy, since it links and summarises all the levels of separation that the wave includes. Alessandra mentions one socio-cultural practice promoted by a group of southern Italians that organises recreational events. The one Alessandra mentions reproduces an Italian practice, the *aperitivo*.[20] *Aperitivo* consists of eating finger food dishes before dinner, usually along with alcoholic drinks. This group's version is accompanied by techno music DJ sets that have the purpose of prolonging the event as much as possible and of targeting a specific type of customer. Since its foundation, the group became famous - and infamous - among Italians in London. However, due to the party-like nature of these events, the almost explicit tolerance of drugs, the group's link with the hospitality sector, and its founders, this group typically attracts a specific type of migrant.[21] In symbolically choosing this event, Alessandra summarises a series of differences noticeable in the Italian community which do not allow her

[20] The name of the event - *Aperifamily* - is an example of creative translanguaging, since it derives from the Italian word *aperitivo* and the name of the organising group (that I cannot mention for ethical reasons).
[21] I refer here to the type of migrants whom Alessandra in this extract, Lucio before, and Maria in the following segment, create distance from. According to my participants' descriptions, these are migrants who work mainly in hospitality, are keen to consume drugs, are less educated, more attached to Italian traditions, and less open to the host country's culture.

to feel connected to the entirety of the wave. In lines 11-16, she distances herself from a hypothetical person that, although being Italian and so nationally connected, frequently attends these types of social gatherings. Alessandra's way of phrasing this distance is interesting. In line 16, she says "non *c'ho* argomenti" - "I don't have topics in common" - specifying that there is also a communicative separation within the wave. Alessandra uses the absence of interests in common as a symbol of her otherness. This aspect can be also linked to the presence of different sociolinguistic profiles within the post-crisis wave. From my observation, I noted that non-dialectal speakers negatively evaluate a too frequent recourse to dialect, still interpreted as a sign of low education or provincialism. However, since I did not interview my participants on this particular aspect I can only suggest my insider researcher impression which I gathered from informal conversations with my participants and with other members of the post-crisis wave.

Other cultural aspects can determine such a sense of otherness and the need to challenge a national association imposed by origin, as we read in the segment below.

**Segment 5. The noisy Italian**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06<br>07<br>08 | Maria | allora sì secondo me c'è tipo:: <..> allora va beh io tendenzialmente li riconosco gli italiani a Londra è molto facile ci sono <.> secondo me alcuni son facilmente riconoscibili anche per il modo in cui si comportano che tendenzialmente a me non piace [giggling] | well yes in my opinion there is li::ke <.> so well I usually recognise the Italians in London it's really easy <.> in my opinion some are easily recognisable also for the way they behave that I generally don't like[giggling] |
| 09 | Giulia | [laughing] tipo quelli della B**? | [laughing] like those ones from B**? |
| 10<br>11<br>12<br>13<br>14<br>15<br>16<br>17<br>18 | Maria | allora in parte loro e in parte quelli che fanno gli italiani e a me questa cosa non mi piace cioè lo vedi che sono chiassosi sono irrispettosi una cosa che non mi piace degli italiani a Londra è che non hanno senso del fatto che sono ospitati in un posto | well partially them and partially those who behave as Italian people and I don't like this thing I mean you can see that they are noisy they are disrespectful one thing I don't like of the Italians in London is that they don't have any awareness of the fact that they are guests in a place |
| 19 | Giulia | m: | m: |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | Maria | e si fanno riconoscere troppo cioè | and they make themselves recog- |
| 21 | | non so:: se sai che in metro c’è un | nisable too much I mean I don’t |
| 22 | | certo modo di stare non è detto che | kno::w if you know that on the tube |
| 23 | | il tuo il fatto che tu sei più allegro | there is a certain way of behaving |
| 24 | | più ***yeah*** allora ti devi comportare | and it’s not obvious that since you |
| 25 | | così secondo me questo è sbagliato | are more joyful more ***yeah*** then you |
| 26 | | <.> o anche tipo una certa | have to behave this way in my opin- |
| 27 | | lamentela rispetto al modo di | ion this is wrong <.> or also a cer- |
| 28 | | essere degli inglesi cioè io capisco | tain type of complaint on the way |
| 29 | | che c’è una differenza e la noto e io | English people are I mean I under- |
| 30 | | so che non voglio vivere come | stand that there is a difference and |
| 31 | | vivono cioè la società inglese non è | note it I mean English society is not |
| 32 | | una società che è fatta per me ma | a society for me but it deserves re- |
| 33 | | va rispettata perchè sei qui capito? | spect because you are here under- |
| 34 | | e quindi ogni tanto quando invece | stood? and so sometimes when in- |
| 35 | | c’è una sorta di:: m:: lamentela su:: | stead there is a certa::in m:: com- |
| 36 | | che gli inglesi sono fatti così o che | plaint o::n English people being like |
| 37 | | comunque questa città è fatta cosà | this or that in any case this city is |
| 38 | | questa cosa mi dà fastidio ed è | like that this thing bothers me and |
| 39 | | molto italiana anche perchè ad | this is very Italian even because for |
| 40 | | esempio il cibo cioè comunque a | instance the food I mean anyway I |
| 41 | | me una ***pie*** mi piace! [laughing] | like to eat a ***pie***! [laughing] under- |
| 42 | | capito? cioè se non mangio la pizza | stood? I mean if I don’t eat pizza I |
| 43 | | non è che muoio [laughing] | don’t die [laughing] |

The reflection on the possible practices of Italians in London becomes a pretext to criticise stereotypical attitudes and habits of Italian people. Maria directs the narratives about her ability to spot Italians. In lines 07-08, Maria moves from a generic observation about Italians’ gestures and behaviours, to her personal judgment of her compatriots. My following question (line 09) derives from a common idea Maria and I had shared many times regarding a type of Italian who attended the same university (indicated as ‘B**’ in my extract) in Italy and who generally works in the financial sector in the city. Although Maria works in the same environment, she can play the outsider role since she did not attend that university. However, in the present case, her criticisms were directed towards a type of Italian migrants that she addresses as “those who behave as Italians” (lines 10-11). Maria implicitly suggests that migration should transform migrants, and, therefore, remaining anchored to an exclusively Italian behaviour results in a negative presentation of self. A second important aspect, which she mentions in line 16, is the idea of “being hosted”. In Maria’s opinion, Italians are hosted in London and, therefore, they should respect the host country’s behaviour rules. A failure to comply with these norms shows disrespect. Maria starts listing the traits that characterise many Italians who have moved to London. Although she positions herself as distant from those other migrants, who are depicted as incapable of dealing peacefully with the host environment, she also reclaims

her identity as a transitory migrant (lines 29-32). As Bucholtz and Hall (2005) theorised, to define her identity, Maria positions herself in relation with two *others*, the unrespectful Italians and the English society. For Maria, migration is not a stable change in life and she sees it a phase of passage. This was mentioned previously in her interview and is now reaffirmed through a critique of English society and through a declaration of intention of not wanting to live as "they live" (lines 30-31). However, this declaration is mitigated by the acknowledgement that every society deserves respect - respect that migrants in particular should show owing to their guest status. Her critique of this type of Italian migrant concludes with a comparison between her attitude towards British food and those of other fellow compatriots. The introduction of a British dish (line 41, "pie") is used as a metaphorical index of the entire British cultural system (indicated by the speaker as society, in line 31) and its endorsement, and, hence, situates this speaker in a transnational dimension. This allows Maria to separate herself from those who do not want to be involved in the host country's culture and who did not embrace a new transnational life. Concluding this presentation of self, Maria refers to a stereotype (the habit of eating pizza, lines 42-43) to reinforce her claim of acceptance of the new, albeit temporary, social identity.

The following presentation of Italian people is similarly negative. Alessandra highlights the elements that prevent her from becoming friends with people presenting these traits. This analysis was carried out in relation to her intention of creating distance from a community membership.

**Segment 6. The non-integrated Italian**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06<br>07 | Alessandra | i miei amici sì non tutti tutti ma i<br>miei più cari amici sono<br>decisamente diversi <.> persone<br>italiane che ho conosciuto a Londra<br>tante persone mi sembrano quasi<br>peggio di tante persone italiane che<br>vivono in Italia | my friends yes not everyone<br>but my closest friends are<br>very different <.> other Ital-<br>ian people I met in London<br>many of them look even<br>worse than many who live in<br>Italy |
| 08 | Giulia | ok | ok |
| 09<br>10<br>11 | Alessandra | però non potrei mai diventare<br>amica di questa tipologia di italiano<br>a Londra quindi ovviamente:: | but I couldn't be friends<br>with this type of Italian in<br>London so obviously:: |

Prompted by my uncited questions about the types of friendship Italians can develop in London, Alessandra compares Italians in London with Italians who live in Italy. Indirectly here (lines 05-07), she introduces another challenge to a typical trait used by the media to describe

the post-crisis wave (see section 2.5.). The result of the brain drain propaganda is that such a migratory flux was described as an elitist phenomenon. The media promoted the idea that those leaving were the best minds in the country. Obviously, politicians exploited this image to influence general opinion (Tintori and Romei, 2017) and this surely influenced the public debate on emigration in Italy. It is not surprising, then, that in the negative characterisation of the typical Italian living in London, Alessandra relies on such a comparison, which aims to redefine the image of the post-crisis wave. In a following turn, Alessandra characterises the new Italian migration as "manodopera in fuga", a manpower drain, contrasting such an image with the one more commonly diffused. Maria and Alessandra's voices are not isolated. However, it is important to acknowledge that, despite this shared criticism, all the participants admitted that the core of their friends' and acquaintances' networks consists of Italians. Moreover, in understanding the alternative ways of grouping, in contrast to the exclusively ethnic and national one, we note that the national element is challenged but cannot be discarded completely.

#### 5.2.3. A different type of acceptable community

As Jones (2014) says, researchers studying community language dynamics face the presence of a top-down imposition of the idea of community. As explained in 3.3.1., Jones (2014) uses Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' (2006), in contrast with the concrete existence of grass-rooted communities, to which speakers acknowledge their belonging. Previously we saw that the present project's migrants, through their denial of membership, challenge this top-down categorisation. Instead, in the present sub-section, I explore the different methods of grouping spontaneously suggested by the informants. Methodologically, this section seeks to demonstrate how participants can help researchers in understanding the natural contexts in which linguistic practices are nourished.

Most of the interviewed speakers automatically suggested a different approach to the notion of *grouping* after having denied their belonging to the Italian community. For instance, in segment 1, lines 28-30, we learned that participants can substitute the national community with a narrow group of intimate friends that replaces the whole community and provides a feeling of belonging. However, as we read in the segments below, this is not the only alternative grouping criteria suggested. In this segment, Matteo and Andrea, two waiters who moved to London in 2012 due to the lack of job opportunities in their small town, discuss their feeling of belonging to the Italian community.

**Segment 7. The C** family**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Giulia | secondo voi siete membri di una comunità? | in your opinion are you member of a community? |
| 03 | Matteo | lo siamo diventati sì | we became it yes |
| 04<br>05 | Giulia | ma nel senso <.> ti senti parte di una comunità: | but I mean <.> do you feel part of a community: |
| 06 | Andrea | ripeti la domanda | repeat the question |
| 07 | Giulia | sei membro di una comuità? | are you member of a community? |
| 08 | Matteo | sì cazzo siamo etichettati | yes fucking hell we are labelled |
| 09 | Andrea | siamo membri della famiglia C** | we are members of the C** family |
| 10 | Giulia | della famiglia C**? | of the C** family? |
| 11<br>12<br>13 | Andrea | sì perchè passiamo dodici ore della nostra vita e sessanta ore a settimana in quel posto | yes because we spend twelve hours of our life and sixty hours per week in that place |
| 14<br>15<br>16 | Giulia | [quindi è più il tuo posto di lavoro che è il tuo gruppo piuttosto che <.> per dire <.> gli italiani a Londra | [so it is more your working place your group than the <..> let's say <.> the Italians in London |
| 17 | Andrea | esatto | exactly |
| 18<br>19<br>20<br>21 | Matteo | sì poi quelle rare volte che usciamo se incontriamo degli italiani ovviamente ti senti <.> ti trovi a tuo agio | yes then the rare times we go out if we meet some Italians you feel obviously <.> at ease |
| 22 | Andrea | non è vero | it's not true |
| 23 | Matteo | sì | yes |
| 24<br>25<br>26<br>27<br>28<br>29 | Andrea | tu sei una persona <.> io se incontro degli italiani in giro mi danno fastidio <.> perchè sono lì li guardo e aspetto che facciano una cosa da italiani perchè la fanno | you are only one person <.> if I meet some Italians around they bother me <.> because I'm there and watch them and wait for them to do something Italian be-cause you know they will do it |

When asked about his belonging to the Italian community, Matteo mentions a change in status that the migration caused (line 03) and the "labelling" (line 08) Italians undergo. He implicitly justifies his answer by blaming this labelling that seems to be imposed from above and which results in the addressing of the Italians in London as a community. More concretely, Andrea provides his own interpretation of community, presenting himself and his friend -

through the use of the verb conjugated in the first-person plural - who works in his same restaurant, as members of a family (line 09). The C** (name of the restaurant) family is the only form of community Andrea acknowledges, correcting the friend who took for granted his belonging to an abstract community. In lines 11-13, Andrea supports his claim with a consideration of his temporal involvement in this family. Andrea and Matteo spontaneously point out the difference between imagined communities (Anderson, 2006) and grass-rooted communities (Jones, 2014) that I explained in 3.3.1. The distinction suggested by the participants guided my research in the choice to initially approach the post-2008 crisis wave not as a whole, but as a set of sub-communities that enter into contact owing to new migrants' belonging to different groups. These sub-communities cannot be seen as isolated entities and individuals belong to several communities which may come in contact. Importantly, we must remember that people may decide to align with the sub-community also outside its boundaries, although they cannot always act as if they are inside the group. To provide an example of this, Matteo and Andrea maintain their membership of their sub-community based at their workplace even when they are in a private environment such as their home. From the recordings carried out at their house, it emerges that their professional identity, nourished and negotiated in the sub-community they spend most of their time in, can be in use in the re-negotiation of roles with other migrants. The last important aspect to consider in the above extract is the individualistic claim which Andrea proposes at the end (lines 24-29), since the contact with other Italians is presented as problematic. An extremely similar process of thoughts emerges in another interview, which nevertheless presented a different aspect: the homeland's influence on the London community's grouping system. Alessandro and Domenico were university mates in Italy and then they moved to London together in 2013 and decided to share a flat. They work in the City as financial brokers.

**Segment 8. The same life**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06<br>07<br>08<br>09 | Giulia | ecco però ad esempio io leggo<br>molto poco le notizie sulla<br>comunità italiana a Londra né<br>quella storica né quella::<br>ammesso che ci sia una nuova<br>comunità italiana <.> noi giovani<br><.> solo per la ricerca <.> voi vi<br>sentite parte di una comunità<br>italiana a Londra? | there it is but for instance I read<br>very little news about the Italian<br>London community neither on<br>the historical one nor on the<br>one::: assuming that there is a<br>new Italian community <.> us<br>young people <.> only for the re-<br>search <.> do you feel part of an<br>Italian London community? |
| 10 | Domenico | ma non saprei | well I would not know |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11<br>12<br>13<br>14<br>15<br>16 | Alessandro | be' messa così forse un po' sì cioè gli italiani soprattutto della nostra università che fanno il nostro lavoro sono involontariamente una comunità quindi più o meno direi di sì | well if you put it this way maybe a bit I mean the Italians especially of our university who do our same job they are unintentionally a community so I would say more or less yes |
| 17<br>18<br>19 | Giulia | però più un sottogruppo specifico di persone che hanno il vostro stesso stile di vita o: | but more of a specific sub-group of people who have your same lifestyle o::r |
| 20 | Alessandro | sì | yes |
| 21<br>22<br>23 | Giulia | cioè ti senti di appartenere allo stesso gruppo del cameriere che lavora a Londra? | I mean do you feel you belong to the same group of the waiter who works in London? |
| 24<br>25<br>26<br>27 | Alessandro | no esatto l'essere italiano a Londra non è l'unica cosa che accomuna le persone della sottocomunità a cui mi riferivo | no exactly being Italian in London it's not the only thing linking the people of the sub-community I was talking about |
| 28<br>29 | Giulia | esatto[22] <.> concordi o hai mai pensato:: | good <.> do you agree:: or have you ever thou::ght? |
| 30<br>31<br>32<br>33<br>34<br>35<br>36<br>37<br>38<br>39 | Domenico | sì in generale non sono uno che ama le comunità non mi piace definirmi in base alle altre persone <.> però secondo me ci sentiamo più membri di una comunità ma per le esperienze passate che abbiamo insieme università lavoro simile abbiamo iniziato nello stesso periodo | yes generally I'm not that kind of person who loves communities I don't like to define myself on the basis of other people <.> but in my opinion we feel members of a community but for the same past experiences that we lived together university similar job we started working at the same time |
| 40<br>41<br>42<br>43<br>44<br>45<br>46 | Giulia | quando arriva u::n nuovo italiano avete un atteggiamento un po' da fratelli maggiori? vi sentite che gli dovete insegnare cose per entrare nella comunità o nel vostro gruppo? vi è mai capitato? | when a:: new Italian arrives do you have a little bit of an older brothers' attitude? do you think that you have to teach him things to enter your community or in your group? has this ever happened to you? |
| 47<br>48 | Domenico | che noi conosciamo no <.> non mi sono mai posto il problema | not that we know no <.> I've never thought about it |
| 49<br>50 | Giulia | non so non vi è mai capitato di dover dire a qualcuno qui | I don't know haven't you ever had to tell someone here it |

[22] The word I use - *esatto*, 'correct' - could give the impression I was keen to obtain a correct answer which then Alessandro provides. However, this is a spontaneous discourse marker I use frequently as a means of connection with my interlocutors, to establish a bond.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 51<br>52<br>53 | | funziona così prendi la metro così oppure vai lì fai il NIN avete mai fatto questo? | works this way take the tube this way or go there apply for the NIN have you ever done this? |
| 54<br>55 | Alessandro | no è tutta gente che ha viaggiato tanto quindi non aveva bisogno | no this is all people who travelled a lot so they did not need it |

Interviewed on their feeling of belonging (lines 07-09), the informants initially hesitate. Afterwards, Alessandro responds positively although he redefines the meaning of community (lines 12-15), presenting himself as member of an Italian, though very transnational, community formed of people who attended the same university as him in Italy and who now work in London in his field (banking and finance). As Alessandro suggests (line 15), such a way of grouping is not consciously planned but it is the result of a similar educational background. Moreover, stimulated by my questions, he supports this claim by highlighting the weakness of the national bond and explaining that the forming criterion of the above-mentioned community is not exclusively based on geographical origins (lines 24-27). Domenico, who lives with Alessandro, works in the same sector, and studied at the same university in Italy, supports this statement. That notwithstanding, he introduces his argument by presenting himself as an outsider (lines 30-33). Domenico claims his individuality by refusing my own comparative approach (proposed in lines 21-23) and, only after he has created distance from my formulation, does he support his friend's point of view. He therefore sustains the idea of the existence of sub-communities.

From this extract, two important elements emerge. Firstly, both Domenico and Alessandro mention that the connection between the members of their sub-community[23] had started in Italy when they were studying. Such a grouping is, therefore, transplanted to London and reproduces a separation that was already evident in the homeland. The attendance at the same private and prestigious university - in Italy - and their professions - in London - allowed these migrants to acquire an elite lifestyle (that I mention in lines 18-19). These migrants started to develop this sense of affiliation in Italy and this acquired a new meaning after migration. Due to their access to an elite lifestyle, and due to their expressed belonging to an elite, these migrants can claim their distance from other types of migrants. The second aspect concerns the

[23] As we can see from the extract, I use the term *sub-group* to indicate the difference between the whole Italian community and the group these participants might actually feel they belong to. In his reflection, Alessandro uses the term "sub-community" to indicate the same idea I introduced. It is clear then that both Alessandro and I wanted to highlight the existence of sub-groups/sub-communities within the Italian community. These sub-groups are seen as grass-rooted communities and thus they are perceived as more concrete, in contrast with the abstractness of the notion of Italian community.

characterisation of this different kind of migrant. Domenico, in lines 47-48, exhibits disinterest in welcoming newly arrived migrants by negating his collaboration in a normal and traditional aspect of the migratory chain structure (Haug, 2008). Alessandro's explanation for their lack of involvement in such a practice adds elements to the characterisation of this diverse type of migrants. In lines 54-55, he describes people belonging to his sub-community as travellers, expert and competent people who do not need other migrants' help. From a linguistic perspective, this also reminds us that these elite migrants arrive in the new country with a satisfactory knowledge of the English language and, therefore, they do not generally need linguistic guidance. This aspect is crucial for the presentation as unconventional migrants who are used to hypermobility (Blunt, 2007), which is part of the professional experience of the members of this sub-group.

### 5.3. Professional sub-communities and the display of identities

The previous sub-section sought to explain the circumstances in which participants try, negotiate, nourish, and test other speakers' reaction to new linguistic practices. In such contexts, identities are (re)constructed and they can then be performed on different occasions. The overview of participants' beliefs regarding their migrant community suggests a new conceptualisation of Italian migration. Since new migrants challenge pre-imposed migratory labels and disown the traditional socio-cultural practices of the Italian community, the existence of the community itself teeters precariously. In addition, due to the internal super-diversity of the post-crisis wave, we realise that a determinist holistic approach would lead to generalising statements which are imprecise for this (non-)community. The linguistic resources of each speaker are diversely indexically loaded and even the migratory trajectories may thoroughly differ for each migrant. Although we can observe shared patterns, especially within the communities of practice the speakers belong to, the ontology of this new mobility demanded a more internalised, intimate and interpretative methodology. As García explains in an interview carried out by Grosjean (www.psychologytoday.com, 2016), translanguaging allows for such an approach, since the attention of the analyst is dedicated to speakers' personal work on their linguistic practices and speakers' own perspectives are central. I therefore begin with the explanation of the different identities the present project's participants are keen to display, in relation to the contexts in which their linguistic practices entangle with their identity work. As I show in sub-section 5.3.1., the most relevant type of social identity the informants display is the professional migratory identity.

### 5.3.1. The new *lingua della giobba*

According to every participant involved in this project, the re-shaping of their identity originates in their workplace. As I have already explained, it is easy to trace a regular pattern in the identification of the workplace as the sub-community which participants mainly associate with. The aim of this sub-section is to discuss the exploitation of varieties and registers of English that help the speakers to perform a series of professional identities - even outside the workplace. For Italian migration literature, this relation between profession and new (linguistic) identities is not completely innovative. I have already described the multilingual practices of past Italian migrants in section 2.4. However, there is a special study I want to present here since it is connected to the data I analyse in the following sub-sections.[24] The study was carried out in 1939 by Prezzolini. It was entitled *La lingua della giobba.* In this, he described the translingual style of Italian migrants in New York at the beginning of the twentieth century. His empirical analysis provides a picture of the translanguaging practices developed in New York's Little Italy, demonstrating the lexical outcomes of the contact between New York English and the dialects spoken in the Italian peninsula. The title itself is emblematic of this style. *Lingua* means "language", *della* "of the", and *giobba* is an adapted and integrated loanword (Greavu, 2014; Haspelmath, 2009). It derives from "job" and it is orthographically adapted, since the voiced postalveolar affricate /ʤ/ is written according to the Italian grapheme system (Bertinetto, 2010). Prezzolini (1939), through such graphemic adaptation, was loyal to the pronunciation of the migrants, who would utter these loanwords influenced by their (mainly southern) dialectal accents. Moreover, the Italian suffixal vowel /-a/ is added after the gemination of the plosive bilabial phoneme /b/. Reading Prezzolini's (1939) work and other similar studies (Levingstone, 1919; Menarini, 1947), we understand that *giobba* is only one exemplar item accompanied by many others that characterised past migrants' translingual style (cf. 2.4.).

The structural analysis of the term, however, obscures an extremely relevant factor. Prezzolini highlights how this new translingual style was connected to poverty, scarce education and a mixture of dialectal varieties, which were the only languages spoken by Italian migrants at that time. He links this *lingua* to the fatigue of adapting to a new world. Prezzolini's reflection concerns the ontology of *giobba*, which diverges substantially from the notion of job. He

[24] In my literature review (section 2.4.), I mainly focused on studies carried out in the UK and in Australia, since - as I explained - these two countries received migrants with very similar sociolinguistic profiles at the same time (after the Second World War). Since Prezzolini's study was carried out in the USA before the Second World War I considered inappropriate reviewing it in section 2.4. I therefore preferred to introduce the concept of *lingua della giobba* in the chapter where I actually analyse and show examples of the new *lingua della giobba*.

writes: "La *giobba* esprime bene la condizione in cui si trovarono molti nostri emigranti quando arrivarono in questi porti, e cercarono un lavoro qualunque, tanto da potersi sfamare. La *giobba* e' il lavoro che si trova, senza affezione e senza interesse spirituale" (Prezzolini, 1939: 122)".[25] Giobba is thus an index of the experience of those migrants who escaped poverty and unemployment to find occupations in the USA, and who worked on their language to achieve mutual intelligibility with those coming from different regions of Italy, while struggling to integrate into the receiving society.

The present analysis suggests that the post-2008 crisis migrants engage in the production of new varieties of the *lingua della giobba* which mirror the internal differences in the wave. These new expressions of *lingua della giobba* show the differences between past and contemporary migrants, their sociolinguistic profiles, their background, and their refusal to follow structural patterns that are too heavily indexical. In using this concept, I suggest a twofold contextualisation. For many participants, English[26] is the language of their professionalism. For these speakers, English is the language used for working, while their true *lingua della giobba* (the mix of Italian, English and dialects) is performed only outside their professional environments with other Italian migrants. In a traditional sense, the *lingua della giobba* is the translanguaging that characterises professional talk, and, therefore, for participants working in mostly monolingual contexts, we can only observe such linguistic practice in non-working situations. On the other hand, for different types of speakers, the *lingua della giobba*, consisting in a translingual use of Italian, one or more dialects, and English, is the language admitted in their professional environments. From my investigation, it emerges that the mixing of languages is permitted in contexts in which only (or mainly) Italians are employed and in which linguistic hierarchies are not over-imposed. As García explains (in Grosjean, 2016), translanguaging intervenes when languages do not need to follow the social power rules, or in order to subvert them. In the Italian community in London, this means that translanguaging, at a professional level, can only happen when speakers are not constrained by strict norms of power relation, usually due to a relaxed and friendly professional environment.

It is important to address an element which greatly distinguishes the linguistic practices of past and new Italian migrants. Integration and adaptation characterised the nineteenth and

[25] My translation: "Giobba well expresses the condition lived by many of our emigrants when they reached these harbours, and searched for any job, just to be able to eat. Giobba is the job one finds, without affection or spiritual interest" (Prezzolini, 1939: 122).
[26] English is an extremely generic concept. For simplicity reasons, I use the generic term unless I need to refer to a particular variety of English for the purposes of my analysis.

twentieth century migrants' translingual behaviour. The variety those migrants created echoes a practice accepted not only in cases of language contact abroad, but also by Italian monolingual speakers living in Italy. This practice tended to integrate foreign words into standard Italian phonetic, morphological and syntactic structures. However, as I explained in section 2.2., this pattern is now only accepted for verbal lexical borrowings, while the adaptation of nominal and adjectival lexical elements seems indexically loaded (Erasmi, 1983).[27] I do not propose examples of such translingual items here but I do it in sub-section 5.5.1., where I relate the old migrants' style to indexical features rejected by the contemporary migrants. If it is true that translanguaging implies speakers' individual creativity and is characterised by spontaneity and instantaneity (Li Wei, 2011), it is also undeniable that patterns and specific lexical preferences help to develop a new shared *lingua della giobba* that, in this phase, is only at an embryonic stage. After this structural parenthesis, which was useful to highlight the main differences between present and past migrants' linguistic practices, I now move towards the qualitative in-depth analysis of extracts in which the participants display, discuss and perform their new professional identities.

#### 5.3.1.1. The *lingua della giobba* for City workers

One consistent sub-group within the post-2008 crisis wave is formed of young Italians employed in the financial and economic sector. Representatively, half of my sample works in this sector. We could say that they are City workers. The City is the historical financial district in London situated in proximity to Liverpool Street Station. Although nowadays London has also other financial districts, the City workers represent a category of professionals regardless of their actual work location. An innovative aspect of the new *lingua della giobba* is its ability to index the internal diversity of the new migratory wave. For City worker migrants, English is the exclusive professional language, as they work in international environments and, sometimes, the use of other languages is not welcome due to company policies. Since for many participants this was their first employment, their professional selves developed in English-dominant environments and this affected their ability to discuss work related topics without relying on English.

In the segment below we see how Domenico, Alessandro and Simone, in an episode recorded at their house, engage in translanguaging practices which exclude me, Giulia, from

[27] I presented some of these realisations in the in the paper "In-between identities: A sociolinguistic analysis of the community of young Italians living in London" (Pepe, 2018), where I discuss the preliminary structuralist analysis of my dataset.

the conversation. Marco, a former university mate and now colleague of the participants, was present too at this dinner. These City worker participants moved together to London and they all started to work after they moved. They all knew English very well before their arrival. During this dinner, I was the only outsider and I embraced my role by being self-deprecating, at the beginning of the event, about my complete ignorance of financial issues. Consequently, several topics covered in this recording excluded the researcher, being based on field-specific terminology. However, this then becomes a pretext for the participants to perform their new identity contrasting it with mine. In this segment we find Alessandro and Domenico, already described, and Simone and Marco. They all went to the same university in Italy and moved around the same time. Simone lives with Alessandro and Domenico. They all work in the finance and banking sector.

**Segment 9. Foreclosing[28] translanguaging**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05 | Alessandro | beh sì la grande idea è di chi l'ha fondato poi manca in Italia ce lo porti <..> ho letto ieri che ***lending club*** sta avendo problemi con i ***default rate*** | well yes the big idea is of who founded it than there isn't in Italy you bring it <..> I read yesterday that ***lending club*** is having troubles with the ***default rates*** |
| 06<br>07 | Simone | che sono più alti di quando:? | because they are higher than whe::n? |
| 08 | Alessandro | sì il doppio | yes double |
| 09 | Simone | tipo? perchè? | such as? why? |
| 10<br>11<br>12 | Alessandro | da quattro o cinque per cento sta avendo sette otto per cento però: +++ | from four or five per cent it's having seven eight per cent bu::t +++ |
| 13<br>14<br>15 | Simone | [towards Giulia] poi ti traduciamo tutto quello che stiamo dicendo | [towards Giulia] then we'll translate everything we are saying |
| 16 | Giulia | [laughing] esatto per me: | [laughing] exactly for me: |

[28] The term *foreclosing* is here used as a synonym of *excluding*. This means that - through the use of translanguaging - participants can exclude other speakers (in this case, myself) from their conversations, strengthening their belonging to a specific sub-group other speakers do not belong to.

| 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 | Alessandro | [laughing] <..> quello non è tanto un problema perchè tanto loro il rischio lo passano il problema è se questi iniziano a fallire e poi soprattutto quelli delle ***fd loan services*** se il tipo fallisce la durata del ***loan*** si cancella e questa ***fee*** mensile la la saluti <.> è quello il loro rischio non è rischio capitale | [laughing] <..> that is not a real problem because they pass their risk the problem is if they start to fail and then especially those of the ***fd loan services*** if the guy fails the length of the ***loan*** it's can-celled and you say goodbye to this monthly ***fee*** <.> that's their risk not the capital risk |
|---|---|---|---|
| 28 29 31 32 | Simone | ah ok capito quindi devi acchiappare cioè se un modello gli dice non è il quattro ma l'otto eh cazzo | ah ok understood so you need to catch I mean if a model tells them it's not four but eight fuck you |
| 33 | Domenico | eh ma lì sì | eh but there yes |
| 34 35 | Alessandro | [eh sì sono degli errori non è facile | [well yes these are mistakes it's not easy |
| 36 37 | Simone | beh sì loro lo hanno fatto in modo aggressivo | well they did it in an aggressive way |
| 38 39 | Domenico | considera che loro hanno tutti quelli che non hanno gli altri | consider that they have all of those that others don't have |
| 40 41 42 | Alessandro | sì però l'avranno prezzato aggressivo per creare un mercato | yes but they must have priced in an aggressive way to create a market |
| 43 44 | Domenico | c'è una ++ si chiama ** che fanno ***loan*** solo a studenti ***mba*** | there is a ++ it's called ** they do ***loan*** only for ***mba*** students |
| 45 | Simone | eh? | what? |
| 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 | Domenico | il problema è che se sei studente ***mba*** al novanta per cento non ti fanno il ***loan*** perchè ad esempio sei un francese che va in America quindi la banca francese non te lo fa perchè dice va beh tu vai a studiare in America non so neanche dove andarti a cercare quella Americana dice tu non hai storia pregressa e quindi ci sono questi che sono un po' in mezzo al nulla | the problem is that you if you are an ***mba*** student ninety per cent they don't allow the ***loan*** because for example you are French you go to America so the French bank doesn't give it to you because they say well you go to study in Amer-ica I don't even know where to find you the American one says you don't have previous history and so there are these who are a bit in the middle of nothing |
| 59 | Alessandro | ok | ok |

| 60<br>61<br>62<br>63 | Domenico | e se tu guardi il ***default rate*** di quelli che hanno l'***mba*** è tipo bassissimo hanno l'un per cento | and if you check the ***default rate*** of those who have an ***mba*** it's very low they have like one per cent |
|---|---|---|---|
| 64 | Simone | l'avevo vista anch'io questa | I saw this too |
| 65<br>66<br>67 | Alessandro | e sì nel sistema bancario ci sono un sacco di:: resistenze dovute a motivi: | eh yes in the banking system there is a lot o::f resistance due to reaso:ns |
| 68<br>69<br>70<br>71 | Marco | e in Africa invece <.> io parlo sempre con il mio collega dello Zambia e lì non moderano mai gli ***accesses to credit*** e dal: | while in Africa <.> I always speak with my colleague from Zambia and there they never moderate the ***accesses to credit*** and to the:: |
| 72 | Alessandro | [giggling] pistola | [giggling] gun |
| 73<br>74<br>75<br>76<br>77<br>78<br>79 | Marco | no <.> come si chiama il ***loan shark*** <.> l'usuraio <.> vai da lui o hai una famiglia molto benestante che ha relazioni con le banche magari internazionali <.> o vai dall'usuraio sai dove sono | no <.> how is it called the ***loan shark*** <.> the usurer <.> you go to him or you have a very wealthy family that has maybe relation with maybe international banks <.> or you go to the usurer you know where they are |
| 80 | Alessandro | [laughing] | [laughing] |
| 81<br>82 | Marco | ***chargiano*** del venticinque per cento | ***they charge*** twenty-five per cent |
| 83 | All | [laughing] | [laughing] |
| 84<br>85 | Marco | infatti io gli dico ***man*** cazzo stai qua | in fact I tell him ***man*** what the hell do you do here |
| 86 | Alessandro | vai a fare l'usuraio | go to be an usurer |
| 87 | All | [laughing] | [laughing] |

In lines 13-15, Simone acknowledges my externality[29] through a comment that refers to the need for a translation for me to be included in their dialogue. This turn has a double pragmatic function. Firstly, it alludes at the fact that I am a not-competent speaker on this occasion and, thus, my position as an outsider is underscored. Secondly, it reminds all the other participants that my involvement in the conversation depends on their willingness to involve me. This notwithstanding, Alessandro neglects the appeal for conversational solidarity emerging from

[29] I here refer to the fact that I do not work in the finance and banking sectors therefore I am an external for these speakers. I was also the only woman present at that dinner. Therefore, in that situation, I could play the role of the external speaker that does not belong to their sub-group and the decision of including me in their conversations was left to the participants.

Simone's turn by continuing his discourse. He does it once again with regards to translanguaging practices. Translanguaging is indexical (Silverstein, 2003) of his membership in a specific sub-community (the one of Italians who work in the City and in the financial sector, membership of which Alessandro claims in his interview). The researcher is seen as a person who does not belong to this group, and only the actual members can decide on her temporary inclusion. The embracing of this transnational professional identity and its imposition on those belonging to a different sub-group is justified by the assumption that, despite the internal super-diversity, the attitude towards translanguaging appears to be coherent in the entire interviewed sample.

The last part of this segment (starting in line 68) shows that translanguaging can also inform comic conversational episodes. Initially, Marco involves translanguaging in his narrative (lines 68-79), but he then decides to translate, showing the ability to go back and forth between two languages to obtain the exact effect wanted. He says "loan shark" (lines 73-74) in the first clause and he then translates it and uses the Italian term, *usuraio.* The same choice is then followed by Alessandro in line 86. Speculating on the rationale, we could say that, given Simone's previous comment, the translation aims to include me in a less technical part of conversation. However, Marco turns to translanguaging again to conclude his narrative and to obtain the hoped-for effect, the laughter of his audience. He engages in translanguaging by adopting an adapted borrowing (line 81), *chargiano*, which is commonly used by the new Italian migrants. *Chargiano* derives from 'to charge' and it is conjugated in the third person plural according to the Italian suffix system of present indicative verbs. Note that in my dataset, this was produced by another participant who does not have any contact with the participants recorded here (see segment 40). This means that I am included in the audience without any need for "translation". Translanguaging allows Marco to situate the story in a specific frame, the working context, playing two roles (the role of the narrator and of the narrative's protagonist), and to move the conversation towards a more inclusive topic, shifting to a more jovial tone. The engagement in translanguaging practices in such a way put in place the possibility of returning to this resource for the rest of the evening. Alessandro, the organiser of the evening, promotes this attitude for the rest of the conversation, usually followed by Marco and Simone. Domenico, on the other hand, is coherent with his linguistic behaviour, and his engagement with translanguaging is restricted to the expression of his professional identity. Domenico exhibits a negative judgment of translingual practices. Although admitting the impossibility for him to avoid this behaviour, he dislikes it and disapproves of it. Interestingly, he seems to disapprove of it due to external judgment, as we will see in the analysis of another extract from

Domenico's interview (segment 46). Here, he seems keen to approve these new practices only when imposed by his professional affiliation. In this way, he reinforces his membership of a community which is not only geographically bounded, but also situates himself in a globalised professional world, as we read in the following extract.

**Segment 10. The industry**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06 | Giulia | secondo voi il vostro stile di lavoro è permeato modificato dallo stile inglese? dallo stile di vita inglese non so lavora molto fin da quando sei giovane sfasciati il weekend | in your opinion is your working style informed modified by the English style? by the English life-style I don't know work hard since you are young get wasted on the weekends |
| 07<br>08<br>09<br>10 | Domenico | più che inglese forse direi anglosassone <.> però poi secondo me è l'***industry*** che ti condiziona | more than English maybe I would say Anglo-Saxon <.> but then in my opinion it's the ***in-dustry*** that affects you |
| 11<br>12<br>13<br>14<br>15<br>16<br>17 | Alessandro | sì anche secondo me è molto di più l'***industry*** la finanza in generale ovunque tu vada c'è molta più somiglianza dello stile di lavoro in finanza a geografie diverse che tra due lavori differenti a Londra | yes also for me it's much more the ***industry*** the finance in gen-eral everywhere you go there is much more similarity in the working style of finance in di-verse geographies than in two different jobs in London |
| 18<br>19<br>20<br>21 | Giulia | ok <.> è come se apparteneste a un micro mondo che potrebbe essere un po' ovunque? che sia Londra che sia:: | ok <.> it's like if you belonged to a micro world that could exist a bit everywhere? no matter Lon-don o::r |
| 22 | Domenico | sì | yes |

Domenico and Alessandro's strong sense of membership helps them in defining their professional identities. They appear to appreciate this belonging since it implies their membership to a worldwide community that is not geographically marked. In this extract, the speakers present themselves as global citizens (lines 14-17), refusing the restrictive label of "professional migrants in London". The possibility of proposing such an identity is provided by their alignment with the lifestyle of "the industry" (lines 09 and 12), and English as a global language is the vehicle through which they express such an engagement. As I mentioned earlier, these migrants started to develop a global feeling of belonging, linguistically expressed through their knowledge of the global language of business before their migration while they attended university in Italy.

For other participants, on the contrary, only the migration prompted such an involvement with the rest of the world, spurring on new transnational and globally connected selves. Such a process of global engagement is strictly connected to the acquisition of a certain type of professionalism learnt through the acquisition of the global lingua franca. The following extracts illustrate this.

**Segment 11. Working in Italian**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06<br>07<br>08<br>09<br>10<br>11<br>12<br>13<br>14<br>15<br>16<br>17<br>18<br>19<br>20<br>21<br>22<br>23<br>24<br>25<br>26<br>27<br>28<br>29<br>30<br>31<br>32<br>33<br>34 | Maria | io sono molto contenta di aver<br>imparato l'inglese perchè<br>effettivamente è un modo di<br>comunicare però non lo so bene<br>comunque in ogni caso ed è molto<br>settoriale nel senso che è molto<br>confinato al mio:: all'ambito<br>lavorativo <.> ad esempio io se<br>dovessi tornare in Italia il mio lavoro<br>in italiano non lo saprei fare perchè<br>non ho neanche un vocabolo<br>veramente cioè se mi devi parlare se<br>ti devo parlare di mutuo ad esempio<br>l'altro giorno ho letto un articolo <.><br>praticamente adesso abbiamo<br>questa:: ***contractor*** ecco banalmente<br>***contractor*** non so come dirlo in<br>italiano e ci ha dato un articolo che<br>lei ha scritto pe::r non so un forum o<br>una cosa del genere e l'articolo<br>parlava di mutui o comunque di<br>credito no? sostanzialmente e io non<br>riuscivo ad associare le sue parole e<br>la terminologia a quella inglese<br>pazzesco è stato terribile e io dovevo<br>cioè io questa cosa l'ha data a un<br>ragazzo inglese quindi io dovevo<br>aiutare questo ragazzo inglese a<br>tradurlo [laughing] non sapevo non<br>sapevo [laughing] però questa è una<br>cosa normale perchè io il lavoro l'ho<br>imparato qua l'ho imparato qui e non<br>vengo da questo contesto<br>universitario | I am really happy I have learnt<br>English because it is really a way<br>to communicate but I don't know<br>it well anyway in any case it's<br>very sector-specific I mean it's re-<br>ally restricted to my:: working<br>field<.> for example me if I had to<br>go back to Italy I wouldn't be able<br>to do my job in Italian because I<br>don't have any vocabulary I mean<br>if you have to talk to me if I have<br>to talk to you about mortgages for<br>instance I read an article the other<br>day <.> basically now we have<br>thi::s ***contractor*** see simply ***con-<br>tractor*** I don't know how to say it<br>in Italian and she gave us an arti-<br>cle she wrote fo::r I don't know a<br>forum and the article talked about<br>mortgages or anyway about credit<br>right? basically and I was not able<br>to link her words and the termi-<br>nology to the English one crazy it<br>was terrible and I had to I mean<br>she gave this thing to an English<br>guy so I had to help this guy trans-<br>lating it [laughing] I didn't know I<br>didn't know [laughing] but this is<br>normal though because I learned<br>the job here I have learned it here<br>and I don't come from this univer-<br>sity context |

Maria and I discuss the changes that have occurred in her linguistic behaviour. She initially claims her satisfaction as regards having learnt English and the reason for such happiness corroborates what I suggested before. English is a way to communicate (lines 03-04) and, most

probably, it is the more powerful language in Maria's professional field. Undoubtedly, knowing English empowers City workers, as it allows communication globally with a large group of customers and co-workers. Although the speaker seems interested in presenting herself as part of this globally engaged community, she also plays the outsider role at the same time, showing that identities can also be contradictory (see references in sub-section 3.2.2.). By evaluating her knowledge of English, she slightly distances herself from her professional environment. However, in the following phrase, she specifies the connection between her work and her knowledge of English. In lines 09 and 10, Maria claims that she would not be able to work "in Italian". The formulation of this sentence is interesting because Maria does not say that she would not be able to work in a different geographical place (in Italy, for example), but she recognises a difficulty in working using a language different from English. In a certain way, this absence of geographical sense can be related to the considerations of the previous segment. The language of the job, for her and for many other Italian migrants, is English, but this does not limit Maria to London.

Maria's involvement in translanguaging at the beginning of her narrative (line 16) suggests the fragility of the traditional dichotomy between marked and unmarked languages (Myers-Scotton, 1983; 1993b; 1999; 2002; Myers-Scotton and Bolonyai, 2001), already discussed in sub-section 3.6.1. As I explained, such fragility encouraged the development of new theoretical frameworks in the field of language contact studies. Italian migration literature generally accepted Myers-Scotton's models, especially to describe first-generation migrants' uses of languages. Traditionally, English would be labelled as the marked choice, in contrast with Italian that is the most dominant language for first-generation migrants. However, for speakers like Maria, English is not a marked choice when discussing work-related topics. I would argue that this binary distinction, taken for granted in many studies on Italian communities (among others, Ciliberti, 2007; Di Salvo, 2014; 2015), is not appropriate in this new research context. Maria's narrative explains how bilingual minds might work from a translanguaging perspective. When forced to operate in a monolingual structure, the translation of her new contractor, Maria finds herself lost. Her bewilderment is expressed through her repetition in lines 29-30 of the unfinished phrase "I didn't know". The contractor is Italian (information I had from a previous meeting with Maria) so I could assume the translation was from Italian to English. We see the function of the mother tongue colleague as expert writer (lines 26-27) while Maria's support as a bilingual helped in clarifying the contractor's communicative intentions. The shift from

monolingual Italian to monolingual English, without the mitigation of the recourse to the *lingua della giobba*, is therefore a painful process, and almost unnatural for the speaker. On the other hand, it is natural to rely on an entirely English terminology, owing to the connection with her linguistic practices, her employment history and educational background (lines 30-34). In these lines, we also see how this participant claims her right to self-categorise (Edwards, 1998). In the final phrase, we note how Maria distances herself, once again, from her own work, by specifying her different educational pattern, which does not allow her to go from one monolingual professional identity to another.

The absence of geographical restrictions suggests that English, for contemporary migrants, is not only the host country language, but is also a global language which allows the migrants to work in international contexts and to live in cosmopolitan cities. Global English (Crystal, 2012), English as a Lingua Franca (Jenkins, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2005) and Lingua Franca English (Canagarajah, 2007) are terms that may describe the variety mostly spoken in multicultural and multilingual London (Salverda, 2002). These varieties have their own phonetic (along with morphological and syntactic) system and features, and their own pragmatic use. In London, the post-crisis migrants daily come into contact with many varieties of English and Englishes spoken by non-native speakers. According to Cheshire *et al.* (2011), due to London's high migration rate, in many areas of the city, non-native English speakers outnumber native speakers. For these scholars, this encourages the generation of a variety of English, called Multicultural London English, which is mostly spoken by second-generation migrants who learn English from non-native speakers but who were either born in the UK or who arrived in the country when they were children. For this reason, I would not use this term to describe the variety of English acquired by first-generation Italian migrants. Nevertheless, it is important to note that many Italian migrants learn English during their migration, through the completion of everyday tasks, while mostly interacting with non-native speakers. English is a tool to communicate with other migrants and with the world. This aspect, most of the time ignored by structuralists, could affect the actual translingual realisations of the speakers which may not rely on a precise variety of English only.

#### 5.3.1.2. The *lingua della giobba* in the hospitality sector

My study suggests that post-2008 migrants who arrive in London with low language competence follow one of the most common Italian migratory schemas. They are usually employed in the hospitality sector (restaurants, bars, hotels, catering companies, etc.) for two main reasons. Firstly, the demand for workers in this sector is extremely high in London (Church

and Frost, 2004). Secondly, expertise on food and beverages is a stereotypical Italian trait, and, especially in Italian restaurants, bars and food stalls, ethnically congruent staff provides the customer with a sense of authenticity and, therefore, of quality. Such forms of standardised employment also have a linguistic relevance. Italian migrants who do not feel confident speaking English seem keen to search for workplaces where other employees are Italian speakers who can help them with their work training or other job-related matters. In this kind of workplace, translaguaging is not unusual, regardless of the ethnicity of the employers. The segment below is an example, and, although the speaker was not recorded at work, he reproduces an everyday typical conversation he has with an Italian colleague. Giulio is a southern Italian migrant who arrived in London in 2016. He moved to London when he was offered a job as baker for an Italian bakery. Giulio often complained about the lack of opportunities in his region. He acknowledged that his knowledge of English was very low at his arrival although he had a secondary school diploma.

**Segment 12. The English tools**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06<br>07<br>08<br>09<br>10<br>11<br>12<br>13 | Giulio | perchè mi risulterebbe<br>abbastanza:: difficile poi comunque<br>a lavoro per esempio tutti i nomi<br>tutte le le le <.> utensilerie tutto<br>quello che ci serve usiamo tutto<br>tutto in inglese cioè io quando vado<br>da ***nisbet*** il fornitore io vado a<br>comprare ***gloves*** i ***blue gloves***<br>vado a comprare il ***blue roll*** vado a<br>comprare il ***soft brush*** non vado a<br>comprare la carta assorbente e:: il<br>pennello o i guanti vado a<br>comprare le ***soft sponge*** | because it would be quite::: hard<br>then anyway at work for instance<br>all the nouns all the the the <.><br>tools everything that we need we<br>use everything everything in Eng-<br>lish I mean when I go to ***nisbet*** the<br>supplier I go to buy ***gloves*** the ***blue***<br>***gloves*** I go to buy the ***blue roll*** I go<br>to buy the ***soft brush*** I don't go to<br>buy the kitchen roll a:::nd the brush<br>or the gloves I go to buy the ***soft***<br>***sponges*** |
| 14<br>15 | Giulia | [giggling] le sai tutte benissimo | [giggling] you know them all very<br>well |
| 16<br>17 | Giulio | cioè capito io metto il ***bain marie*** | I mean understood I put on the<br>***bain marie*** |
| 18 | Giulia | il che? | what? |
| 19 | Giulio | il ***bain marie*** | the ***bain marie*** |
| 20 | Giulia | che cos'è? | what's that? |
| 21<br>22 | Giulio | il bagnomaria [laughing] ma forse è<br>francese | the bain marie [laughing] but<br>maybe it's French |

| 23<br>24<br>25<br>26<br>27 | Giulia | qualsiasi cosa sia io che non lavoro nell'***hospitality*** non la so quindi forse sarà una parola di settore <.> [laughing] io e te non apparteniamo allo stesso gruppo | whatever it is I don't know I don't work in ***hospitality*** so maybe it's a jargon word <.> [laughing] we don't belong to the same group |
|---|---|---|---|
| 28<br>29<br>30 | Giulio | io per tagliare il pollo per tagliare le patate chiedo a C** dov'è il ***chopper*** <…> | to cut the chicken to cut the pota-toes I ask C** where is the ***chopper*** <…> |
| 31 | Giulia | [se stai parlando di:: | [if you are talking abou::t |
| 32<br>33<br>34 | Giulio | [cioè io sto sul ***front*** C** mi metto sul ***front*** <.> o mi metto sul ***back***? | [I mean I'm on the ***front*** C** I put myself on the ***front*** <.> or I go on the ***back***? |

Giulio begins with justifying his translanguaging at work. He introduces the topic by saying that it would be difficult for him to shift from his *lingua della giobba* to a variety of monolingual Italian (lines 01-02). He then spontaneously provides examples suggesting the naturalness of such realisations. In listing the objects he uses for his work, Giulio explains how translanguaging works for him. In lines 06-13, he relates his linguistic behaviour to a daily practice. The tools are "bought" in English, and, therefore, then, the sense and the essence of those objects are provided by the English signifier, even when the conversation proceeds in monolingual Italian with his colleagues. By using the word *Italian* I simplify a complex situation. Since Giulio comes from a southern region and he is also a dialectal speaker, and his colleague is from Rome, their conversation involves the mixing of different varieties of Italian and dialectal utterances as well. Giulio's language is practical, and is tangible, as he confirms in line 16. The uncertainty regarding the languages used in such translingual utterances proves Giulio's relation between new idiolect acquisition and London multilingualism (lines 21-22). In line 29, while ignoring my response to the previous turn, Giulio starts reproducing an imaginary but plausible exchange with his colleague, C**. The one-sense conversation is rich in translanguaging elements and it is a true expression of Giulio's *lingua della giobba* at his workplace. In addition, it shows how, in conversation, different times and spaces can coexist (Busch, 2017). As Creese and Blackledge summarise (2017), linguistic repertoires show the mobility in time and space of the speakers. In the present case, Giulio is living the interview's time and space frame but he is contemporaneously displaying his professional persona that he performs every day shifting the narration to a different chronotope (Bakhtin, 1981). The notion of *chronotope* reminds us the interconnectedness of space and time in narration for the creation of the narrated world. With his words, Giulio includes me in this new chronotope. As Perrino points

out, “[T]hough the expectation is for a story to be deictically anchored as there-and-then, there are many cases in which the two chronotopes are not clearly separated” (2011: 40). The interviewee and the young professional Italian migrant personas collided allowing me to enter this speaker’s linguistic world, despite my otherness to his own environment (which I point out in lines 23-27). Giulio is so involved in his performance he ignores my attempt to move on to the next question. This informant proposes an inclusive behaviour, discarding my provocation regarding our diverse belongings. Conversely, in other pieces of data we observe the importance othering has in the display of migrants’ identity. The belonging of the participants to different sub-groups is often explicitly stated in natural conversation, as in the example below. In this segment, we find Cristina, a southern Italian migrant who moved to London in 2013 to improve her knowledge of English. Although she was graduated in law, she worked as waitress for two years due to her lack of competence in English. At the time of the recordings, she worked as estate agent.

**Segment 13. The exclusion**

| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06<br>07<br>08 | Cristina | no ma se gli dici ocra non lo sanno sicuro <..> sai che a volte quando lavori nell’***hospitality*** ti fanno fare tipo i:: gli esami di::: ***health and safety*** e capita sempre la domanda su <.> scusa F** lo so che per te questo è un mondo: | no but if you say ochre they don’t know it for sure <.> you know sometimes when you work in the ***hospitality field*** they make you do something li::ke exams o::f ***health and safety*** and there’s always the question on <.> sorry F** I know that for you this is a wo::rld |
|---|---|---|---|
| 09<br>10 | Alessandra | [completamente sconosciuto | [completely unknown |

Cristina interrupts her narrative to point out Alessandra’s (F** in the extract) non-belonging to the sub-group of people working in the hospitality sector (lines 06-07). Alessandra’s facial expressions determined Cristina’s decision to stop her narrative. It is important to mention that Cristina uses the word *mondo* (line 08) to describe the hospitality sector. This implies the reference to a socio-cultural set of norms and habits understood and lived only by members of the group. This suggests how identities are shaped socially and linguistically through the adherence to this world’s rules. Although at the time of the conversation Cristina does not actually belong to this sub-group, she can play the role of insider due to her past. In the course of her migratory experience, Cristina has lived diverse experiences and worked in many sectors, hence she has the opportunity to act as a competent worker in a large range of domains. As Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) explain with the third principle of their theory of *social*

*identity*, categorization, like the one promoted by Cristina, makes an identity significant to the communicative situation. It is interesting to note here that, usually, Alessandra plays the role of the more expert migrant and of the career-oriented woman. By pointing out Alessandra's otherness from the group, Cristina has the chance to include and exclude the receiver from one group, which is numerically relevant within the new migratory wave. She therefore stresses Alessandra's role of outsider from a social identity common for Italian migration. This extract demonstrates once again how these migrants can decide to include or exclude their addressees in their own world, through translingual practices. They are aware of the existence of different communities of practice and that each migrant can declare their own membership in one or more of these and their foreignness in others.

Showing the newly acquired professionalism through linguistic competence appears to be very important for some participants. In the following extract, Andrea is keen to display his new identity and his loyalty to his professional engagement with his brother. As preliminary information, we need to know that Andrea represents the category of migrants who moved due to scarce job possibilities in his own region. He moved because he followed his brother's suggestion. His brother moved to London in 2010 to learn English and to study at post-graduate level. The two brothers now do not share any migratory experience since they clearly belong to different sub-groups and they consequently have divergent lifestyles.

**Segment 14. Performing competence**

| 01 | Stefano | domani lavori la mattina? | do you work tomorrow morning? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 02 | Andrea | ***yes*** | ***yes*** |
| 03 | Stefano | dieci? | ten? |
| 04 | Andrea | mezzogiorno | midday |
| 05 | Stefano | dieci che fai? | ten what do you do? |
| 06 | Andrea | dieci dieci | ten ten |
| 07 | Stefano | dieci dieci? dodici ore? | ten ten? twelve hours? |
| 08<br>09<br>10<br>11 | Andrea | sempre così sono gli ***shift*** mezzogiorno mezzanotte una una <..> sette quattro mi pagano nove ore ma sono li alle cinque | the ***shifts*** are always like this mid-day midnight one one <.> seven four they pay nine hours but I'm there at five |
| 12 | Stefano | si? +++ | yes?+++ |
| 13 | Andrea | ha più soldi la domenica | you have more money on Sunday |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Stefano | in che senso? | what do you mean? |
| 15<br>16 | Andrea | hai più ***tips*** *de* tutti | you have more ***tips*** *than* every-<br>body else |
| 17<br>18 | Stefano | quindi se le segnano *le ore tue*<br>che fai? | so do they count *your hours* you<br>work? |
| 19<br>20<br>21<br>22<br>23<br>24<br>25 | Andrea | no no ma comunque sanno che<br>non arrivo alle sette ma arrivo::<br>a una certa altra ora <.> già che<br>devi fare quel turno ti danno un<br>po' di più a prescindere <.> è più<br>scomodo <.> la mattina:: ti svegli<br>all'alba:: | no no but they know that I don't<br>arrive at seven but I arrive:: at a<br>certain at another time <.> since<br>you do that shift they give you<br>more money anyway <.> it's the<br>most uncomfortable <.> you wake<br>up at dawn if you do the mornings |
| 26<br>27 | Stefano | quando fai la mattina con che<br>vai? | when you work in the mornings<br>how do you get there? |
| 28 | Andrea | col ***cab*** | by ***cab*** |
| 29<br>30<br>31<br>32 | Stefano | te lo pagano? <..> cioè quando<br>lavori la mattina presto vai<br>sempre col ***cab***? quanto paghi? | do they pay for it? <.> I mean<br>when you work early in the morn-<br>ing do you always take the ***cab***?<br>how much do you spend? |
| 33<br>34<br>35<br>36 | Andrea | un rimborso <..> non mi va de<br>fare un'ora de bus che ti lascia a<br>***Oxford Circus*** o l'altro che te<br>lascia a ***Tottenham Court Road*** | a refund <..> I don't feel like being<br>on a bus for one hour to get to ***Ox-<br>ford Circus*** or to ***Tottenham<br>Court Road*** |
| 37<br>38 | Stefano | ***Oxford Circus*** *so'* manco dieci<br>minuti a piedi | ***Oxford Circus*** *it's* less than ten<br>minute away |
| 39<br>40 | Andrea | na ma alla mattina devo arrivare<br>a una certa ora | nope but in the morning I need to<br>be there at a certain time |
| 41<br>42 | Stefano | e a che ora apre il ristorante::? | what time do you open the res-<br>taura::nt? |
| 43<br>44<br>45 | Andrea | alle otto fino alle nove sono da<br>solo faccio i caffè accogliere alla<br>porta prende' i giubbetti | at eight until nine I'm alone I<br>make coffees I greet at the door I<br>take the jackets |
| 46<br>47 | Stefano | e se t'arrivano dieci persone<br>come fai? | and what if ten people arrive how<br>do you do? |
| 48<br>49<br>50<br>51<br>52 | Andrea | con calma <.> il passista arriva<br>alle otto ma c'ha le cose sue da<br>fare poi arrivano un barista e<br>uno al ***pass*** che deve preparare<br>le cose no | quietly <.> the guy at the pass ar-<br>rives at eight but he has his own<br>things to do then the barman and<br>one at the ***pass*** arrive who needs<br>to prepare stuff |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 53<br>54<br>55<br>56 | Stefano | voi là quindi non *c'avete* i ***supervisor***? c'avete i camerieri:: c'avete i porta piatti? | you there *don't have* the ***supervisors*** do you? you have the wai::ters you have the plate bringers? |
| 57 | Andrea | i ***runner***? | the ***runners***? |
| 58<br>59 | Stefano | i ***runner*** <..> ma vengono fino al tavolo oppure te lasciano là:? | the ***runners*** <.> but do they come to the table or they leave it the:? |
| 60<br>61<br>62 | Andrea | il compito è loro portano i piatti a tavola loro portano i ***drink*** a tavola | their job is bringing the plates to the table they bring the ***drinks*** to the table |

Andrea opts for translanguaging although his brother does not belong to his sub-group since Stefano is a professional white-collar worker. Andrea is the youngest brother. The display of his professional self is an opportunity to present himself as a competent and independent migrant who has developed robust professionalism since he moved to London. Andrea decides to show his new identity so as to underpin his renegotiation of roles. From my observation of these two speakers in a familial environment, when their parents came to visit them, I could deduce that Stefano is seen as the responsible brother, the diligent and independent one, in opposition to Andrea, who does not conform to the rules and expectations of the family. In his renegotiation of the roles imposed by the family, Andrea opts for the display of his new professional identity, which also situates him in a responsible and adult role. Showing his agreement with the linguistic rules of his own sub-group, he is thus authorised to claim a different role within the family set of representations. As we see in line 55, when Stefano does not engage with translanguaging, Andrea notices this avoidance and reformulates the explanation of the hierarchy of the restaurant. Andrea presents a corrective attitude, which settles the norms of the conversation between these speakers.

Translanguaging also allows Andrea to play a character inspired by his professional self when he is at home and, most importantly, with this performance, Andrea shares his performative act by including other speakers in his professional persona by engaging in translanguaging, as we see in the segment below.

**Segment 15. Playing a character**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Giulia | no tu sei pe:r <.> sei più subdolo ma come tuo fratello | no you are fo::r <.> you are more sneaky but you are like your brother |
| 03 | Stefano | più silenzioso | more silent |
| 04 | Giulia | esatto | exactly |

| 05 | Andrea | io faccio i ***side*** di Nutella | I make some ***sides*** of Nutella |
|---|---|---|---|
| 06 | Giulia | io no grazie | not for me thanks |
| 07 | Andrea | te la metto ***on the side*** | I put it ***on the side*** |
| 08<br>09 | Giulia | [giggling] no no non la voglio proprio | [giggling] no no I don't want it at all |

Andrea is here trying to persuade Giulia to accept a dessert. This scene often happens in the house, since Giulia tries to follow a different diet and Andrea tempts her with sweets and desserts. Andrea's insistence consists of reproducing a very traditional Italian practice. Traditionally, the guest is offered the biggest portion of food and the offer for more continues as a sign of kindness and politeness. In this case, Giulia plays the role of the guest. She is on the refusing side and she is the one being served, along with Andrea's brother, Stefano. Therefore, due to his task, Andrea not only performs the host but also his waiter persona, by presenting again his newly acquired professional identity. In line 05, he describes his action by engaging in translanguaging. This lexical insertion is common in his daily linguistic practice and, although he is now in a domestic environment, he resorts to his professional language, which serves a performative purpose. When Giulia declines his offer, he insists by returning to a classical (in his sub-group) translingual realisation (line 07). Once again, he involves himself in this practice despite the presence of other people, Giulia and Stefano, who do not belong to his sub-group. I would claim that, for this speaker, returning to English for this kind of realisation is a performative act. Andrea possibly uses this phrase in his everyday professional life, both with foreign customers and with the Italian staff he works with, and he may see these formulas as professional identity makers. By performing his professional persona, the speaker is including Giulia in his own world, sharing part of his daily routine, and demonstrating his progress in the acquisition of the host country language and his ability to use it properly. Translanguaging - as the linguistic practice that bonds Italian migrants despite their belonging to different sub-groups - connects the two speakers at a deeper level and locates them within the same migratory dimension. Moreover, as these two speakers lived together, translanguaging is a practice they not only share but also discussed several times. The association of this practice to the migratory experience was often stated and therefore I can suggest that translanguaging enables Andrea not only to play a character, but to signal our belonging to the same migratory group.

#### 5.3.1.3. Translanguaging: a tool to say who you are

In the sub-section above, we understood how professional identities can also be performed and lived outside the workplace. In this sub-section, I continue to explore the relation between translingual practices and professional identities, by focusing on two aspects: the rationale for translanguaging and the link between translanguaging and the interpretation of professional values. In segment 16, Nicola discusses the value of English in relation to his professional world. Nicola is a southern Italian migrant who moved to London in 2013. He works as director of an Italian company that organises internships for Italian high-school students. Most of his co-workers are Italian. He claimed that his linguistic competence at his arrival was sufficient but not very high. He acknowledged that working for an Italian company helped him to make career faster.

**Segment 16. Giving sense to who you are**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03 | Giulia | cioè secondo te l'inglese è una lingua che ha uno scopo lavorativo? | in your opinion does the English language have a professional purpose? |
| 04<br>05<br>06 | Nicola | alcuni termini mi viene da usarli più semplicemente in inglese <.> cioè li vedo più ***effettivi***[30] non so come dire | I find easier to use some terms in English <.> I mean I consider them more ***real*** I don't know how to say |
| 07 | Giulia | efficaci? | effective? |
| 08 | Nicola | efficaci <.> [laughing] ***effective*** | effective <.> [laughing] ***effective*** |
| 09 | Giulia | [laughing] | [laughing] |
| 10 | Nicola | più efficaci in inglese | more effective in English |
| 11 | Giulia | ok | ok |
| 12 | Nicola | cioè ti ho detto ***skills*** prima | I mean I said ***skills*** before |
| 13<br>14 | Giulia | ha più senso dirlo in inglese? | does it make more sense to say it in English? |

[30] *Effettivo* (masculine plural *effettivi*) in Italian means 'real', but not 'effective'. However, the speaker gives the Italian word a new meaning, owing to the influence of English. As we see in the following lines, he meant to say *efficace* (masculine plural *efficaci*) which translates 'effective'.

| 15<br>16<br>17<br>18<br>19<br>20<br>21<br>22<br>23<br>24<br>25<br>26<br>27<br>28<br>29<br>30 | Nicola | cioè l'altro giorno parlavo con un<br>mio amico e gli dicevo ***fatti quotare***<br>invece di fatti fare il preventivo<br>dicevo fatti ***quotare*** perchè alcuni<br>termini un po' perchè mi piace ma<br>alcuni termini comunque mi danno<br>veramente il senso:: ***compagnia***<br>***company*** io dico sempre la<br>***compagnia*** in Italia non si dice<br>***compagnia*** si dice azienda io dico<br>***direttore*** in italiano è<br>amministratore non sono direttore<br><.> quindi alcuni termini li sento<br>veramente che in inglese sono più<br>diretti danno più il senso di quello<br>che fai | I mean the other day I was talking<br>with a friend and I was saying ***get***<br>***a quote***[31] instead of get a quote I<br>was saying ***get a quote*** because<br>some terms a little bit because I<br>like it but other terms really they<br>give me the sense::: ***company***<br>***company*** I always say ***company*** in<br>Italy you don't say ***company*** you<br>say society I say ***director*** in Italian<br>is administrator I'm not a director<br><.> so I feel that some terms in<br>English are more direct they give<br>more the sense of what you do |
|---|---|---|---|

The exploitation of English happens spontaneously in the first part of the segment. The formal register of the communicative situation (the interview) causes Nicola's doubt about the word chosen. In line 06, Nicola opts for a loanshift, recognising only after my suggestion his translingual realisation. By adapting the English word 'effective' into an existing Italian morpho-syntactic lexical item, *effettivi*, he adds a new meaning to the Italian adjective. The consequent laugh suggests an agreement of the two speakers about what happened, and how important this episode is in a discussion on the use of English in Italian migrants' speech. Without any particular solicitation, Nicola explains his point on the effectiveness of English since the transfer of English word meanings into Italian words helps him to create a fluid professional style. The concluding turn (lines 15-30) is extremely important to understand the value attributed to translanguaging. For this speaker, English is more than a linguistic resource. It is a provider of sense and, through the use of it, the speakers can explain their new world, and, in this case, their new professional world. In line 12, Nicola mentions the word "skills". This item indexes a professional system that Italian migrants experience more in the host country than in the homeland. The assessment of workers' actual skills and the appreciation for them are elements that the participants believe are neglected in the Italian job market. It is important to specify that the reality of facts could differ, but the perception of the speakers is the only truth

[31] *Quotare* in Italian does not have the meaning of 'getting a quote' - it only means 'fixing the price' (*Dizionario Grazanti Italiano*, 2017; *Vocabolario Treccani*, 2017). Since the word keeps the morphology of an existing Italian word but it acquires a new meaning, this can be called a loanshift. Loanshifts are a type of borrowing (Haugen, 1950). They are words, already existing in a language, which acquire new meanings due to the influence of another language (Correa-Zoli, 1974). In this segment we also see *compagnia* - that acquires a new meaning from the English word 'company' (firm with sole proprietorship or partnership) while in standard Italian this would be *azienda* – and *direttore*, from 'director', which is not the correct Italian title for the position this speaker occupies (in standard Italian this would be *amministratore*).

that matters. I base my analysis on my project's participants and on other studies on new Italian mobility (reviewed in 2.5.). Italian migrants denounced a lack of meritocracy in the homeland's job market and they identify this as one of the main reasons to migrate. The deployment of the English language, then, is presented almost as a necessity for the description of a job market considered fairer and more skills-based. Resorting to translanguaging, for Nicola, is a way to obtain the real sense of his world (lines 20 and 21), and, hence, by accepting English influences on his linguistic behaviour, he can also deliver that sense. We observe here how translanguaging is an extremely important means to express speakers' interpretations of their world (Li Wei, 2011).

In the following example, we see the important function mixing has in providing an adequate description of one's work. The involvement of the English language seems crucial to better contextualising the job of these participants. In this segment, Ciro, a southern Italian migrant who moved to London in 2014 in order to find a job. In the recordings of spontaneous events he often preferred his town dialect over Italian. His linguistic competence both in standard Italian and English were very low. Further details about Ciro are provided in following analyses.

**Segment 17. Accepting what you do (and what you are)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Giulia | e che fate a Londra? che lavoro fate? | and what do you do in London? what's your job? |
| 03 | Ciro | attualmente? | at the moment? |
| 04 | Giulia | sì | yes |
| 05<br>06<br>07 | Ciro | lavoro in uno ***sho::p*** <.> come te lo spiego non so come posso definirlo un bistrot? | I work in a ***sho::p*** <.> how I can explain it I don't know how I can define it a bistro? |
| 08 | Cristina | una catena? | a chain? |
| 09 | Ciro | lavoro in una catena che fa paste | I work for a chain that makes pasta |
| 10<br>11 | Cristina | ***fast food*** ma che fa ***healthy food*** | ***fast food*** but that makes ***healthy food*** |
| 12<br>13<br>14 | Ciro | [sì fa solo<br>pasta ed è bar vende caffè e::<br>vende insalate | [yes we<br>make only pastas and it's a bar it<br>sells coffees a::nd it sells salads |
| 15 | Giulia | ok e tu che fai? | ok and what do you do? |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16<br>17<br>18<br>19<br>20<br>21<br>22<br>23<br>24<br>25<br>26 | Cristina | io lavoro in un’agenzia che affitta camere però è molto diversa dall’agente immobiliare in Italia <.> il mio titolo è ***letting manager*** anche se mi vergogno di questo nome <..> l’altro giorno un ragazzo mi ha scritto M** è molto professionale e io ho pensato a come faccio io le ***viewing*** <.> che cioè proprio ***professional*** è un’altra cosa | I work for an agency that rents rooms but it’s very different from the estate agent in Italy <.> my title is ***letting manager*** even though I’m embarrassed about this name <..> the other day a guy wrote me M** is really professional and I thought about how I do the ***viewing*** <.> that I mean ***professional*** is something else |
| 27 | Giulia | M** è più professionale? | is M** more professional? |
| 28<br>29<br>30 | Cristina | mamma mia è serio *par a vede* che sta andando alla messa <.> serissimo | oh gosh he is serious *it looks like* he is going to church <.> very serious |
| 31<br>32 | Giulia | è un ragazzo che quando lavora lavora | he is a guy that when he works he works |
| 33<br>34<br>35 | Cristina | cioè io le faccio proprio a tarallucci e vino <.> però io affitto <.> a parte quella stanza che è maledetta | I mean I do them in a very friendly way <.> but I rent <.> apart from that room which is cursed |

Ciro seems reluctant to engage with translanguaging. He pauses after using a translingual item (line 05) and then admits his incapability of describing the place he works for. We must consider the fact that this conversation happened during an interview and that, according to the rules of power, Ciro may have felt linguistically inferior compared to Giulia and Cristina, who are more educated and experienced migrants. The idea of the *experienced migrant* refers to the fact that post-2008 crisis migrants appear to have criteria to evaluate other members of the wave as knowledgeable and, therefore, more experienced in a series of factors which determine the quality of life in the host country. One important element for being seen as expert, and integrated into the new world, has a linguistic character. My participants consider knowing the English language and using it appropriately a value. Thus, it is not surprising that, while Ciro is trying to avoid translanguaging, Cristina intervenes to help him (line 10), and she does it by engaging in translanguaging. Ciro, on the other hand, continues his explanation avoiding the practice. Interestingly, also, Cristina initially does not resort to translanguaging to describe her job (lines 16-18). She explains, though, that her profession does not coincide with the Italian way of understanding this job. This is relevant as she starts to show her acknowledgment of two professional dimensions, and this aspect is then translated into a linguistic issue. The reason for the lack of engagement with translanguaging is provided in lines 19-21. The speaker

prefers not to use her English title, as she does not adhere to the very particular brand of professionalism this job title seems to imply. She does not see a coherence between her daily professional duties and her English job title. The set of values this title carries contrasts with the self-evaluation of her professionalism. In her narrative (lines 21-24), Cristina suggests a comparison with someone who, in her opinion, truly does enact the professional values required for this job. Cristina's initial avoidance of translanguaging explains the importance that the mixing of English, Italian and dialects can have for the post-2008 crisis migrants. The use of the host language is not merely a linguistic issue and a natural consequence of the exposure to another language. Engaging with translanguaging practices also implies a reflection on the migratory experience, and on the meaning this has for each speaker. It means to express one's own idea of the values acquired through this change, and it is a tool to express this new self, the carrier of these values. As we see in line 25, Cristina reverts to translanguaging to describe her colleague's working skills, and to explain concretely what she does in her job. However, she specifies that she succeeds in her work tasks owing to her friendly behaviour. Cristina uses a very colloquial expression (*tarallucci e vino*[32]), an index of her exploitation of Italian traits, which still seems necessary for her to carry out her duties. The development of this new set of values is not only restricted to professionalism, but it also happens on a more intimate level.

The professional values linked to the British system and the English language are often recognised in opposition to Italian ones. The assessment of professional values has a highly socio-cultural character. The evaluation of respectability and prestige derives from cultural beliefs and traditions and it is often passed on from one generation to another. The Italian job market, and the cultural system related to it, presents a crystallisation and a traditionalism alien to the London system. This difference between the host country and the participants' homeland emerged spontaneously in their conversation. It is important to analyse these dialogues as they allow us to understand how the post-2008 crisis migrants reflect on their professional selves, and how they play with their transnational identities, sometimes aligning with their homeland's cultural set of values with others rejecting it in a polyphonic[33] and multilingual performance. In the following segment, we observe that the Italian set of cultural beliefs, and Italian prejudice and evaluation of prestige contrast with speakers' migratory reality. It is important to observe here how the Italian system is embodied by the hometown.

[32] Meaning: to end a fight or a discussion with a positive attitude, to be extremely friendly and affable.
[33] In this context, polyphony refers to the possibility for the speakers to adopt diverse voices - their own and those of others (Bhatia, 2002).

**Segment 18. Dealing with cultural pressure**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03 | Cristina | a sì lavoravo di fronte io lavoravo al museo della scienza ci passavo | sure I used to work in front of it I worked at the science museum I used to pass by |
| 04 | Giulia | [lo sapevo continua a dirlo! | [I knew it she keeps saying it! |
| 05<br>06<br>07<br>08 | Giulio | sì questa cosa la sappiamo infatti al paese ci chiedevano <.> ma la laurea è sfruttata? cioè eri una guida no? | yes we know this thing as a matter of fact people in our village asked us <.> is the degree exploited? I mean you were a guide weren't you? |
| 09<br>10<br>11<br>12<br>13 | Giulia | siamo passati davanti al museo e gli ho detto che quando dicevi che lavoravi al museo della scienza però lavoravi dentro al bar | we passed by the museum and I told him that you used to say that you worked at the museum but you were working at the bar |
| 14 | Cristina | [laughing] *me::* | [laughing] *come o::n* |
| 15<br>16 | Giulia | fisicamente era dentro al museo | physically she was inside the museum |
| 17<br>18<br>19<br>20 | Cristina | però infatti quando mi chiedevano fai la guida? là dicevo in realtà no <..> però ero ***section team leader*** [laughing] | but in fact when people asked me are you a guide? there I used to say actually no <..> but I was ***section team leader*** [laughing] |
| 21<br>22<br>23 | Giulio | [laughing] che sono posizioni che abbiamo scoperto solo in Inghilterra | [laughing] these are positions we found out only in England |
| 24<br>25<br>26<br>27<br>28 | Cristina | [laughing] dai lasciami gasare un po' <..> anche ora sono ***letting manager*** infatti mi vergogno di brutto quando mando le mail [laughing] che sfigata | [laughing] come on let me flatter a bit <..> also now I'm a ***letting manager*** in fact I'm embarrassed when I send the emails [laughing] such a loser |
| 29<br>30 | Giulio | però spiegalo che ti chiami ***letting manager*** | but explain that you call yourself ***letting manager*** |
| 31<br>32 | Giulia | ma soprattutto spiegaglielo che siete in due | but especially explain that it's just two people |

In her initial turn, Cristina comments on information Giulia and Giulio had provided previously. As previously that evening they had passed by a building which reminded them of Cristina's past, she responds by introducing a narrative related to her professional history. Giulio and Cristina come from the same village and they have been friends since they were children. Nonetheless, they had not seen each other for a long time owing to Cristina's migration and they met again when Giulio moved to London. With her clarification, Cristina is therefore

including Giulio among the addressees. However, Giulia interrupts her, since Cristina's phrasing regarding her experience ("io lavoravo al museo", lines 01-02) is ambiguous and, according to Giulia, inappropriate (line 04). Giulio aligns with Giulia, as they had already joked about this when they had passed by the building and Giulia had updated Giulio on Cristina's usual way of referring to her previous job. In his turn, Giulio introduces two elements, which allows us to understand the Italian socio-cultural set of evaluations regarding the job market. Firstly, he mentions the opinions of their village's inhabitants in evaluating Cristina's professional experience in London. After that, he specifies the concern the villagers had. The exploitation of the degree (line 07) is an extremely important aspect for Italian society. To be more precise, in this case, not following the professional pattern suggested by her degree in law raises concerns about the success of Cristina's migratory experience. Giulia's following turn has an explanatory character and is directed towards Cristina. She shows her disappointment in my utterance with a dialectal discourse marker (*me*, line 14) that contrasts with the tone and content of her following turn. In lines 17-20, Cristina narrates her way of dealing with questions regarding her job. In line 24, Cristina finally aligns with the facetious tone Giulio and Giulia promoted. She introduces her job title accompanying this phrase with a laugh and, therefore, she shows a certain detachment from it. The laugh is better understood after Giulio's comments on the connection between this type of job title, not recognised by the Italian professional cultural system, and the migratory experience (lines 21-23). Cristina then explains she can use her job titles to present a more professionally respectable self by playing on the differences between the host country and her hometown. As we learnt from the segment above, Cristina struggles with embodying her professional identity as regards her job title. Taking advantage of this, Giulio and Giulia promote the shift towards the comical outcome of the dialogue. Giulio introduces a hypothetical audience interested in understanding Cristina's experience that recalls his previous mentioning of the village (lines 29-30), while Giulia points out the reality of Cristina's professional environment (lines 31-32) in contrast to the seriousness which the job title alludes to.

This segment provides an insight into the relation between the Italian cultural manner, and its contrast with that of London, and the work on identity which the new migrants undertake in order to present themselves to their compatriots or to other migrants. In Cristina's case, we observe her reluctance to accept her job title along with the acknowledgment of the possibility of playing with her professional identity. She understands this as functional to present her experience as successful. However, this kind of presentation seems to only be directed to

the ‘judgmental other’ that remained in Italy, since Cristina’s actual incomplete adherence to her professional self emerged in segment 17. This episode shows how languages are an expression of unfixed meanings, as the cultural context and the speakers themselves actually determine the value and function of words (see also Otheguy *et al.* [2015] on this).

**5.4. Becoming adult in a migratory context**

A second theme emerging from the analysis of the dataset concerns the personal growth of the migrants set in motion by migration. Although for most of the participants the migration was voluntary and it is not described as a traumatic experience (while on the contrary we read-about trauma in refugees’ migration narratives), the migratory experience implies a series of changes which determine a transformation of the individual at different levels (Bhugra and Becker, 2005). Generally speaking, Italian society, the economy and the cultural mindset do not facilitate the maturity in its young people (Montanari and Staniscia, 2017). In the Italian case, the co-existence of different generations is problematic, since one generation sees the other as the holder of power (references in 2.5.) and this encouraged many migrants’ decisions to leave. This migration was presented by the literature as a “flight” of young people from a country subject to a gerontocracy (Montanari and Staniscia, 2017: 50), understood as a socio-cultural situation in which much older people hold the decisional power. Scholars started to describe gerontocracy, and the more general cultural system that favours those who have already established their socio-economic status, as an endemic issue of Italian society which only patently emerged in a moment of economic crisis and which forced thousands of young Italians to leave (Bartolini, *et al.*, 2017; King *et al.*, 2016). This premise is important for understanding my following analyses, since the participants in this project grew up in this system, and they are products of these cultural values. Whether they do or do not agree with such a pessimistic vision, it is undeniable that the migration resulted in the placement of a vast part of Italian youth far away from those who are seen as holders of socio-cultural and economic power.

If we agree on the fact that the true beginning of adulthood happens once children leave the parental home (Goldscheider and Torr, 2007), we can see a relation between the migration and the passage from adolescence into adulthood. For many Italians who left Italy after 2008, the migration coincided with that first step towards economic independence, which allowed for growth. For most of the participants, finding an economically satisfactory job in Italy was impossible. Therefore, autonomy could only be gained in a foreign context. In addition, the Italian cultural system does not encourage independence even for those young people who do work. In many speakers’ narratives, I found that the need for independence and the need to challenge

Italian customs led to the decision to migrate. It is, therefore, a consequence of the relation between the maturation pattern and the context where this happens, London. The segment below illustrates this immediate link. Domenico comes from a southern region but he studied for five years in Milan. Hence, he is one of the few participants who had left his parental home many years before migration. Here, he was asked about important episodes of his migratory experience and he identifies the move to his first house in London as one of the most crucial moments in his life.

**Segment 19. The city of growth**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Domenico | ma penso il primo trasferimento nella casa a Londra | I think the first move to the house in London |
| 03 | Giulia | perchè? | why? |
| 04<br>05<br>06 | Domenico | ma perchè ha segnato un po' il trasferimento da una vita da studenti a una vita da lavoratore | well because it marked a bit the shift from a student life to a worker life |

London is clearly the city where the shift from a student life to the "worker life" (line 06) happened and full autonomy was achieved. Domenico did not expand further on his claim, as he is a very reserved person and, therefore, did not seem keen to share other aspects of his experience, whereas other speakers mentioned the relevance of becoming totally self-sufficient after the migration by also providing information about their past. For instance, one participant, Lucio, when interviewed on the acquisition of independence, maintained his intolerance towards those who did not accept the change, and who resisted the most important aspect of the migration. Lucio interpreted the fact of being alone, detached from the social comfort of stable friend and family relationships, as the main signal of the change. For him, a person who had a solitary and quite independent childhood, London is not the city of the passage to adulthood, but it is the place in which his self-sufficiency became a real value. The nature of the friendships and of the human and professional relationships established in this city (transient, uncertain and unstable) are implicit elements which Lucio associated with the loneliness of the migratory experience. This participant's opinion indicates the importance of accepting and learning autonomy in order to survive in the new world. For other participants, the acquisition of autonomy and the passage to adulthood implied a negotiation of roles that, in Italy, are traditionally culturally informed, as we see in the next sub-section.

### 5.4.1. New men, new women: the negotiation of Italian cultural roles

One aspect that distinguishes this thesis from other studies on migrant communities is the interest in first generation and newly-arrived migrants. Although I stressed the idea that this wave is characterised by a high level of internal diversity, one sociological element links all the members. Owing to their fairly recent move to London, the post-2008 crisis migrants included in the project still have a strong bond with their homeland. This connection does not need to be physical, as many participants admitted they do not go back as often as they would like. Nevertheless, the cultural bond is undeniable. It is not surprising, then, that in starting my analysis of adult social identities, I underscored the presence of models derived from the Italian socio-cultural habitus (Lizardo, 2004). These models, however, undergo mutation and adjustment as they absorb the influence of the new socio-cultural environment. As we will read, the performance of these transformations is strengthened and highlighted by the exploitation of new languages acquired through the migration. Therefore, in the selection of the adult personas to display, the Italian mindset informs participants' choices. Selecting from a deeply culturally affected range of social identities, the speaker opts for the 'man of the house' persona, sexist and reluctant to undertake housework, which is, however, mediated by the new social life of the participant.

**Segment 20. Renegotiating masculinity**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Giulia | A** butta questa nel ***recycling*** | A** throw this away into the ***recycling bin*** |
| 03<br>04<br>05<br>06 | Matteo | ora pure la spazzatura devo buttare? dove andremo a finire cazzo! <..> il ***recycling*** che colore è? | now I also have to throw the rubbish away? where the hell we are going to end up! <..> what colour is the ***recy-cling bin***? |
| 07 | Giulia | verde | Green |
| 08 | Matteo | [quello verde? | [the green one? |
| 09 | Giulia | sì | Yes |
| 10<br>11 | Matteo | va beh ***boys*** <..> devo chiudere o può andare così? | well ***boys*** <.> do I need to close it or is it fine this way? |
| 12 | Giulia | no può andare così com'è | it's fine this way |

Giulia asks Matteo to do something for her. Matteo feels that the request is not appropriate since his gender prevents him from doing this kind of activity. With his answer, Matteo plays the role of the traditional man who does not involve himself in domestic tasks (lines 03-05). He strengthens his character by showing his incompetence in the matter (lines 05-06).

However, he accommodates to Giulia's translanguaging, showing a sign of collaboration and showing his willingness to fit into the style of Giulia's house language. He then includes the other men present, specifying the gender of his audience through a translingual item ('boys', in line 10). Using the Italian word, *ragazzi*, would have been less precisely directed since the masculine gender (expressed through the vowel ending '-i') in this case would include also female listener due to the Italian preference for the masculine gender in cases of mixed gender groups. The exclusive address to the other male participants sets up the performative character of the first part of this conversational episode. However, in his final turn, Matteo asks for more instructions to conclude the task in an appropriate manner. He is thus pointing out his involvement in a task that was not appropriate for him in his opinion, but that, in this new life, he must accept. This segment is only representative of this instance. On other occasions, male participants demonstrate acceptance of their new role by reflecting on their behavioural changes and proudly pointing out comparisons to their mothers' abilities.

The possibility of playing very traditional personas along with more innovative ones is not reserved exclusively for male participants. The female participants showed an ability to negotiate their roles as traditional women, but also to perform the identity of the 'independent/career-oriented woman'. For example, the way in which Alessandra presents herself in the first turns of the following extract shows her agreement with the stereotype of the 'spinster' (as it would be defined in Italy to underscore the negative nature of this status), of the single person (not of her choice), an unmarried woman. Instead, in the second part of the segment, she suggests a different image of herself which is helped by a translingual insertion.

**Segment 21. From spinster to independent woman**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Alessandra | va beh ma nessuno deve vedermi | well but no one needs to see me |
| 03 | Giulia | a lei piace addormentarsi | she likes to get to sleep |
| 04 | Alessandra | nessuno mi piglia capito::? | no one takes me understoo::d? |
| 05 | Cristina | [laughing] | [laughing] |
| 06 | Alessandra | io so che nessuno mi piglia! | I know that no one will take me! |
| 07 | Cristina | ma se continuiamo così no | if we keep going this way no |
| 08 | Alessandra | ve beh ma non sono cose:: | well but these are not thi::ngs |
| 09<br>10 | Giulia | ve beh ma mica le devi dire al primo appuntamento | well you don't have to show them during the first date |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11<br>12<br>13<br>14<br>15<br>16<br>17 | Alessandra | ma poi non è che sono cose schifose cioè ho la mia mascherina e la mia crema alla lavanda cioè se questi fossero i segreti <.> quindi ora ne voglio una un attimino più leggera un pochino più ***silky*** sì ***silky*** | but then these are not disgusting things I mean I have my sleep mask and my lavender cream I mean if these were secrets <.> so now I want one a bit lighter a little bit ***silkier*** yes ***silky*** |
| 18<br>19 | Giulia | ma quindi la devi comprare da qualche parte:: | so you have to buy it in some place:: |
| 20 | Alessandra | allora mi do un budget | well I give myself a budget |
| 21 | Cristina | [laughing] mi do un budget | [laughing] I give myself a budget |
| 22<br>23<br>24<br>25 | Alessandra | ti immagini? [laughing] mangio riso e patate per due settimane perchè mi compro la mascherina ***silky*** | can you imagine? [laughing] I will eat rice and potatoes for two weeks because I buy the ***silky*** sleep mask |

Previously in the conversation, Cristina, Alessandra and Giulia had introduced a discussion around bedtime rituals in which Alessandra had explained her habits in a very meticulous fashion. Given the manner in which Alessandra describes these rituals, she then relates them to the fact that she will never find a man since she is now very accustomed to her own habits. Her phrasing of this issue reflects a deeply-rooted gendered idea. The phrase in line 04 allows Alessandra to play the role of the single woman, not chosen by any man, and, therefore, alone. Her statement is supported by Cristina, who agrees on the relation between these habits and the single status of her friend (line 07). At one point, however, Alessandra leaves aside the character of the unwanted single woman to play the role of the independent single woman. An object represents the change in character: the silky sleep mask. Alessandra, expressing her willingness to buy a new sleep mask, starts a renegotiation of her character. Firstly, she introduces her desired object, characterising it with an English adjective (line 17). This translingual element acquires relevance if we consider Alessandra's background. Her family owns a textile factory. This can suggest that she has vocabulary expertise in Italian, and, therefore, her choice to opt for the English translation is indexical. In addition, she acquired the habit of sleeping with a sleep mask after she moved to London. The importance of good sleep in achieving professional goals is a topic often discussed by Alessandra. In her interview, Alessandra affirms that she started to see herself as an independent woman only after moving to London and that her habits changed with the purpose of adjusting to this new stage in her life. With this small translingual item, Alessandra is communicating that this is a habit gained through a growing process that took place in a language different from Italian.

Moreover, Alessandra mentions her intention to buy a sleep mask made of a material, which seems to represent the symbols of wealth and class. This translingual object also provides an excuse to joke about the 'poor migrant persona', from whom this generation of new Italian migrants try to keep their distance (lines 22-23). However, the 'silky sleep mask' additionally offers the opportunity to show her responsibility regarding the management of her finances. The shift from the performance of the dependent woman who waits to "be taken" to the display of the independent woman persona, able to manage her finances, revolves around the material of the sleep mask and the language chosen to describe it.

### 5.4.2. Family roles

When engaging in adult identity performances, the participants pick from a culturally and traditionally marked range of possibilities. The segments above showed how the migrants need to or can renegotiate the personas linked to cultural gender stereotypes. In other instances, the male and the female participants enact adult personas taken from the set of familial figures. In this sub-section, I show the strategies used by one participant to cope with the absence of a figure central for many Italian men in the migratory context: the mother (Morris and Willson, 2015). In an issue linked with the theme of *mammismo* (the problematic attachment of children, in particular of sons, to their mothers in adult age), the *Italian mother* is archetypically described as "a strong woman, who dotes on her son and dedicates herself to him intensively" (Morris *et al.*, 2015: 143). The scholars point out that *mammismo* and the role of the Italian mother appear as factors favouring the structural problems of the Italian family and, by extension, Italian society. The sons' dependence on their mothers does not contribute to the completion of the maturing process, instead slowing it down substantially. As Barocci (2015), Garroni (2015), and Giorgio (2015a, 2015b) highlight, the presence of the mother and the consequent generation of *mammismo* has deeply moulded the structure of Italy, and, consequently, of Italian communities abroad.

In more than one instance, Matteo and I perform the mother and son roles. Other informants who experienced such performances often pointed them out. In one episode, one of the participants, Cristina, even pointed to Giulia's failure as mother due to Matteo's misbehaviour. Giulia and Matteo, however, only display such identities at their convenience, rejecting and renegotiating them in each conversational turn. Translanguaging only helps the performance, as we see in the following extract.

**Segment 22. Reproducing family dynamics**

| 01 | Matteo | [towards Giulia] ***I give up*** | [towards Giulia] ***I give up*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 02 | Giulia | ***done***? | ***done***? |
| 03 | Matteo | m: | m: |
| 04 | Giulia | l'ultimo morso | the last bite |
| 05<br>06<br>07<br>08 | Matteo | è che non c'è un cazzo qua<br>non c'è ***cheddar*** non c'è<br>salame non c'è una sega è solo<br>carne | but there's fucking nothing here<br>there isn't ***cheddar*** there isn't sa-<br>lami here's a fucking nothing it's<br>just meat |
| 09<br>10 | Giulia | e va beh c'è un pezzo di<br>centro se vuoi | and well there is a middle piece if<br>you want |
| 11<br>12 | Cristina | ti metti le patatine dentro<br><……> beh | you can put some chips in it <.....><br>well |
| 13<br>14 | Giulia | cade sempre questo silenzio<br>dopo che parlate voi due | silence always falls after you two<br>talk |
| 15<br>16 | Giulio | io stavo bevendo non potevo<br>parlare | I was drinking I could not speak |
| 17<br>18 | Matteo | questa è la prima volta che<br>siamo tutti insieme? | is this the first time we are all to-<br>gether? |
| 19 | Giulia | sì primissima volta | yes the very first time |
| 20 | Cristina | [burps] | [burps] |
| 21 | Giulia | che tristezza | so sad |
| 22 | Giulio | ah quindi fai i rutti a tavola? | ah so you burp at the table? |
| 23 | Matteo | quindi sono legittimati adesso | so they are legitimised now |
| 24 | Giulia | perchè? c'è mai stato un veto? | why? when were they forbidden? |

This conversation happens during a dinner at Giulia, Matteo and Cristina's home with Giulio as a guest. In line 01, Matteo communicates to Giulia that he is not going to finish his food. To call Giulia's attention to this, he code-switches. This language choice helps Matteo to position himself in a more intimate dimension with Giulia. Giulia has helped Matteo to learn English. Showing that he is able to switch is then a way to acknowledge the teaching-pupil relation created between them. Matteo sees Giulia as a maternal figure, as a person who taught him things and who takes care of him. More specifically, in this instance, Giulia was the provider of the food, the cook, the server, the setter of the table, and the person who was taking care of the guests. All of her actions contributed to characterising her as a maternal figure. The

following turns confirm the agreement of the roles reciprocally decided by these two speakers. In line 02, Giulia, aligning with the linguistic choice of Matteo, asks for confirmation. Once Matteo's intention is clear, Giulia comments on the fact that he has left just a small portion of food (line 04), implicating the possibility of him finishing it. Matteo's response (lines 05-08) confirms Giulia's assumption, that the reason for leaving the last bite was not Matteo's satiety but a complaint about the quality of that last morsel. In an attempt to please him, Giulia offers him a different part of the meatloaf. In the long silence in line 12, we can read the refusal of Matteo to consider any other female figure present at the dinner as a maternal one. Cristina's suggestion is not even commented upon, and in his following turn (lines 17-18), Matteo changes the topic. Another opportunity to perform the mother and son identities is provided by Cristina, who breaks the common rules of Italian cultural system by burping while sitting at the table. Matteo thus implicitly asks Giulia to legitimise this behaviour (line 23). In the final turn, Giulia renounces her maternal role by denying the existence of a rule that prohibited burping while eating in the first place.

In contrast to the extract above, segment 23 shows Matteo's willingness to be considered as a knowledgeable adult and his renegotiation of identity in order to perform a new one.

**Segment 23. Proving to be an adult**

| 01 | Matteo | sì ma era ***semi-skimmed*** | yes but it was ***semi-skimmed*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 02 | Andrea | e che cazzo c'entra? | what the hell does that have to do with it? |
| 03<br>04 | Giulia | beh meno animali che lo infettano | well less animals that infect it |
| 05 | Matteo | ***semi-skimmed*** è meglio | ***semi-skimmed*** is better |
| 06<br>07 | Giulia | e tra l'altro era tutto ***skimmed*** penso | and by the way it was whole ***skimmed*** I think |
| 08 | Matteo | ***semi-skimmed*** | ***semi-skimmed*** |
| 09 | Giulia | ma no era rosso | but no it was red |
| 10 | Matteo | eh ***semi*** | so ***semi*** |
| 11<br>12<br>13 | Giulia | no il rosso è ***skimmed*** <..> aspetta che mi tolgo dall'angolino | no the red one is ***skimmed*** <..> wait I'll move from the corner |

While previously Matteo was keen to perform his 'son' role, which is convenient for remaining in a dependency relation with someone else, and thus effective for maintaining his Italian lifestyle, in segment 23, the speaker renegotiates his role. Since the discussion is around

a bottle of milk, his expertise on the quality of this product indexes his engagement with his migratory (and also professional) life as well. Understanding the differences between products and the new labels, and being aware of the shopping mechanisms and of the value of the money earned seem obvious tasks upon which, however, the process of adult independence is based. Demonstrating his expertise on the properties of the milk, Matteo tries to renegotiate not only his personal identity, but also his social identity as a migrant, as a person who left his own home to challenge himself with a new experience.

In the previous turns of this conversation, Matteo told his flatmates, Giulia and Andrea, that he drank expired milk from a bottle in the fridge. This information had put him in a position of inferiority in front of migrants who appear to have more knowledge about everday matters in the host country, and, thus, people who started the process of autonomy earlier than he did. His defence, hence, starts with a recourse to the English language (line 01). Translanguaging is here an index of Matteo's involvement in the real life of the host country. Although this index may seem not particularly representative, we must rely on a western cultural element linked with those basic commodities. In the public debate, it is not uncommon to criticise politicians who are unaware of the real prices of these commodities.[34] Not being involved with shopping for these products is stigmatised as a demonstration of superiority and naivety. Having said that, and going back to the analysis of the segment, we understand now that the centre of this discussion may appear trivial but it is indeed indexically loaded. The recourse to translanguaging is effective to win his argument over Giulia, who supports Matteo (line 03-04), maintaining that, by being semi-skimmed, the milk could have hurt him less, owing to the lower levels of animal fats. However, the convergence and support does not last more than one turn. Giulia tries to reaffirm her role of the more competent migrant, and 'mother' of the house, by pointing out that the bottle they are discussing contained skimmed milk (lines 06-07). Giulia's description of the colour of the bottle lid stops Matteo's attempt to reaffirm his expertise (line 09). Matteo, however, repositions himself as the knower of the labelling of the milk. We must remember, also, that Matteo's translanguaging additionally indexes his professionalism, since he is a waiter. With the shift towards the correct labelling of the different bottle lids, the discussion is moved outside the domestic environment. Giulia's claim does not concern the type of bottle in the fridge, but it is a general statement on the colour-label system in the UK. Her turn, in line 11, represents the end of such an argument. Giulia reaffirms her social role of

[34] For instance, see Barford's (2012) article *Should politicians know the price of a pint of milk?*

expert migrant, not allowing further discussions and changing the topic (lines 12-13); Matteo, hence, does not contribute with additional turns on this matter.

While the examples above demonstrate the speakers' ability to play different roles, in other cases, translanguaging is a tool adopted by others to impose a new identity connected to family roles on someone else.

**Segment 24. Getting married**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06 | Giulia | poi aspetta mi ha detto <.> io non sono su ***tinder*** <.> mi ha detto che c'è il bonus? che puoi mettere: non so che puoi usarlo due volte al giorno va beh non mi ricordo | then wait he told me <.> I'm not on ***tinder*** <.> he told me that is there a bonus? that you can pu:t I don't know that you can use it two times a day anyway I don't remember |
| 07<br>08<br>09 | Simone | si mi pare <.> me l'hanno fatto vedere durante un ***training*** ma non ha avuto molto successo | yes I think so <.> they made me see it during a ***training*** but it didn't have much success |
| 10<br>11<br>12 | Marco | [towards the recorder and raising his voice] io non l'ho mai usato | [towards the recorder and raising his voice] I have never used it |
| 13 | All | [laughing] | [laughing] |
| 14 | Alessandro | com'è che si chiama? ***tinder***? | what's its name? ***tinder***? |
| 15 | All | [laughing] | [laughing] |
| 16<br>17 | Giulia | perchè tu sei quello fidanzato | because you are the one in a relationship |
| 18 | Marco | sì | Yes |
| 19 | Simone | ***engaged*** | ***engaged*** |
| 20<br>21 | Giulia | ah è vero hai detto che arrivava la futura moglie | ah true you said that his future wife was coming |

Giulia and Simone exchange views on the issue of online dating and share knowledge on the most famous app of modern times, Tinder (lines 01-09). Both of them seem keen to promote their reluctance in using such an app. However, since they are both single, they appear entitled to discuss this without any moral judgment that could be attached to the topic. The moral evaluation becomes explicit in lines 11-12, when Marco raises his voice and claims his distance from the issue. As Creese and Blackledge (2017) remind us, translanguaging cannot be reduced only to the concept of language mixing, but it must also be understood as the sharing of meanings which go beyond languages. Marco's change in voice volume and his body re-directing

towards the recorder suggests the inclusion of a new audience who could read and judge the words uttered. The implicit and commonly shared notion underpinning this movement revolves around the function of the recorder. This device subverts the ephemeral nature of spoken words by transforming them into unchallengeable facts. In line 14, Alessandro sustains Marco's role-play by using his voice, as Alessandro utters a sentence which could and should be pronounced by his friend. Giulia's intervention has instead a metapragmatic function. The researcher is acquainted with Alessandro but she met Marco and Simone, and the other silent participant, Domenico, on the evening of the recording. Therefore, she clarifies the reason for the hilarity by adding information about Marco's status.

In line 19, we understand the relevance of translanguaging. This practice offers the speakers the possibility of expanding the description of a status. The process is as follows. In Italian, the adjective *fidanzato* (line 16) does not have the semantic clarity that the English equivalent, "engaged" (line 19), has, since *fidanzato* can be translated as "in a relationship with", without any allusion to marriage. Therefore, Simone, through the engagement in this practice, contributes to the expansion of Giulia's metapragmatic comment. In addition, his linguistic choice has a pragmatic function as well. Owing to this clarification, Marco assumes a new social identity that separates him from his friend. In the interview carried out with Alessandro and Domenico a few months after this recording, I asked them to explain their relationship with Marco. On that occasion, Alessandro pointed out that their migratory experience had been extremely similar until Marco got married. This information sheds light on the value attributed to the translingual instance. For these speakers, Marco's engagement symbolises the end of a condition that connected all of them. Hence, he is now forced to perform a new role, indexed by the translingual instance. In conclusion, I would assert that the performative act of identity can be promoted by the subjects themselves but also proposed by others.

### 5.4.3. The language of adulthood

In the sub-section above, I explained my hypotheses regarding the involvement in translingual practices to perform identity connected to the realm of adulthood. Thus, I showed post-2008 crisis migrants' ability to exploit their newly acquired linguistic resources to renegotiate identity roles belonging to their cultural heritage. I seek here to show the relation between adulthood, independence and the English language acknowledged by my informants. In the following extract, I lead the participant towards a reflection on her recently acquired independence and maturity, and its link with her changed linguistic repertoire.

**Segment 25. Becoming independent in another language**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03 | Giulia | è comunque stato un passaggio da:: una fase di infanzia a una vita da adulta? | it was anyway a passage fro::m a child stage to an adult life? |
| 04 | Maria | sì più o meno sì | yes more or less yes |
| 05<br>06 | Giulia | anche tante cose di responsabilità saranno cambiate no? | also many responsibilities must have changed, mustn't they? |
| 07<br>08<br>09<br>10<br>11<br>12 | Maria | ah sì quello sicuramente <.> sì dover avere a che fare o comunque amministrare cose anche in un contesto non italiano certe cose tipo la casa e va beh il ***bank account*** e boh tante cose | ah yes that surely <.> sure having to deal or anyway managing things in a non-Italian context also some things like the house and well the ***bank account*** I don't know many things |

Maria agrees with me about the new responsibilities this life brings along with it. Maria stresses the context in which she had to take on obligations (line 08-10) and she uses translanguaging (line 12) to exemplify the new tasks the adult life requires. She does not need to continue the list of burdens as, with the English item, she immediately identified the interesting (for my interview) semantic area, and, due to my belonging to the group, Maria relies on our shared knowledge and experience to establish an agreement on the extension and the indexicality of such an item. In the following segment, our discussion continues.

**Segment 26. Becoming adults in another language**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03 | Giulia | però ad esempio se devi parlare della casa dell'affitto delle questioni di vita pratica | but for instance if you have to talk about the house the rent the matters of practical life |
| 04<br>05<br>06<br>07<br>08 | Maria | ah sì:: anche quelle <.> ah sì quello sicuramente se dovessi tornare in Italia e dovessi sbrigare delle faccende di tipo burocratico anche lì mi mancherebbe il vocabolario | ah ye::s also those <.> ah yes that for sure if I had to go back to Italy and I had to deal with bureaucratic matters also there I would not have the vocabulary |

In asking this question, I was connecting my own experience with Maria's, following her suggestion reported in the previous segment. Maria explains here how having acquired independence in a foreign country has affected her linguistic repertoire. Therefore, she is justifying her translingual practices linked to the management of her new life by hypothesising a return to Italy (lines 05-06). This element is fundamental. In previous turns of the interview, not reported here due to space limitations, Maria presents herself as an independent woman, restless, free to behave as she wishes, and able to manage new aspects of her life. On the contrary, a

return to Italy is imagined (at least linguistically) in negative terms. She focuses on her linguistic disadvantage to implicitly express her ignorance of the Italian system in which she does not have experience in dealing with bureaucratic tasks. Later, Maria admits that she has contradictory feelings towards the changes in her linguistic repertoire. On the one hand, she appreciates the power that learning English gave to her, but, on the other she regrets the loss of purism, of her perfect eloquence in her mother tongue. I have noted the same tendency in the participants with a very high level of education. In producing this last turn, Maria lowers her tone, communicating a certain sadness for her absence of vocabulary. In reality, though, the acceptance of translingual practice as an index of the new adult life is widespread within the sample. I report here a naturally recorded conversation in which some participants discuss the application process to obtain the Indian tourist visa.

**Segment 27. The terminology of adulthood**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06<br>07<br>08<br>09<br>10<br>11 | Alessandro | lo faccio da qui:: sì in pratica l'India ha esternalizzato a una società che se ne occupa a Londra devi fare va beh un ***application online*** e prendere appuntamento io ho appuntamento lunedì alle undici e mezza e e poi se sei residente a Londra da più di due anni conti come un residente | I can do it from here:: yes basically India has given the responsibility to a company that deals with this in London you need to do well an ***online application*** and book an appointment I have an appointment on Monday at half past eleven and then if you have been living in London for more than two years you are considered a resident |
| 12 | Simone | [minchia così difficile? | [what the hell so hard? |
| 13<br>14<br>15<br>16 | Alessandro | ma avrei bisogno che M** mi mandasse degli ***utility bills*** quindi diciamo che sono residente a Londra da ieri | I would need M** to send me some ***utility bills*** so let's say I have been living in London since yesterday |
| 17 | Simone | [laughing] | [laughing] |
| 18 | Domenico | [laughing] | [laughing] |

To obtain a visa, Alessandro would need the help of his previous flatmate in order to prove his residence in London. However, owing to the unreliability of this person, M**, this task seems unachievable. The contrast between Alessandro's responsibility, indexed by his appropriate involvement with the host country's language, and the inconstancy of his ex-flatmate, creates the comical effect, which produces an amusing outcome (lines 17-18). Engaging

in translanguaging here is for Alessandro the most natural way to explain the application process (line 14) and it shows the introduction of English in his repertoire for everyday topics. The preference for the English language for this type of object, the utility bill, suggests the link between his actual adult life, in which he pays the bills for himself not having his family to do it for him anymore, and the language index of such a new phase of his life.

As a final example of this connection between the newly acquired independent identity and the acquisition of a new linguistic resource, I report here an extract from an interview, in which the participants were asked to reflect on the changes their linguistic repertoire underwent after migration. This segment suggests how not only English is the language of adulthood, but also translanguaging itself has a powerful value in order to promote one's adult persona.

**Segment 28. Saving money**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03 | Andrea | si tratta solo di modi di parlare<br>certo uso delle parole inglesi in<br>mezzo a discorsi italiani | it's just a matter of ways of talking<br>sure I use English words in the middle<br>of conversations in Italian |
| 04<br>05<br>06 | Matteo | ma usi anche parole in italiano<br>che abbiano senso in inglese<br>quello sì è vero | but you also use words in Italian that<br>make sense in English that yes it is<br>true |
| 07<br>08 | Andrea | vero <.> ora i soldi io so che li<br>***salvo*** e non li risparmio | true <.> now the money I know that<br>that ***I rescue*** it and I don't save it |

In his initial turn, Andrea belittles his new linguistic repertoire. He addresses this change as a natural process, by mentioning the fact that this is "just" a new way of talking (line 01). Andrea then diminishes his behaviour pointing out only the use of lexical insertions. Matteo, on the other hand, is keener to reflect on the full range of changes his repertoire underwent. In lines 04-06, he describes the loanshift process (see footnote 31). We understand that this translingual practice is widespread, since Andrea quickly provides an example to support Matteo's claim. It is interesting to analyse the loanshift he recalls, as, once again, we note a parallelism between participants' new independent life and their linguistic change. Andrea utters the loanshift *salvare* (line 08). In Italian, the verb *salvare* can only be translated with the meaning "to rescue" and not "to save, to economise" (Collins Italian Dictionary, 2018). However, due to the morphological similarity, the Italian item absorbed the semantic ambiguity of the English one. Therefore, Andrea feels entitled to use this verb with its English meaning to indicate his ability of putting money aside. Of the many examples he could have provided, Andrea proposed the one that locates him in an innovative dimension. Andrea moved to London due to the scarcity of job opportunities in his region. He admitted several times that in Italy

he was not able to become independent owing to the impossibility of saving money. Therefore, if we relate this element of his personal background with his example's choice, we can speculate on the type of persona Andrea wants to show the researcher in the context of the interview.

Moreover, it is important to remember that for those who learned English only after migration, proving their linguistic competence has even a stronger value. As I mentioned before, some of my participants were already competent in English before migration, and therefore, for them, English only acquired a new indexical meaning after their arrival in London. Conversely, for those who learned the language through their migratory experience, English presents a real opportunity to show their development.

### 5.5. The language of migrants: linguistic and identity development

In the dataset, I found numerous instances where the participants openly discuss issues related to their language learning development. Learning the receiving country's language is considered mandatory and a factor that favours proper integration into the new world. In planning my research project, I deliberately included migrants who had arrived fairly recently (within six months) at the time of the first recording, with the purpose of monitoring their engagement with linguistic practices that were newer to them than to those participants who had spent longer time in London. These participants highlighted a link between the acquisition of English and the subsequent possibility of translanguaging. Their engagement with translanguaging was seen as a process useful to show their agreement with a (sometimes challenged, however) migratory status. I therefore start this section by showing different types of techniques deployed by the participants to engage with the host country language during migrants' in-group conversations.

**Segment 29. The learning challenge**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Andrea | cioè ***forgive me*** si puo usare come ***apologise***? | I mean ***forgive me*** can be used as ***apologise***? |
| 03<br>04 | Matteo | più che altro è un perdonami in un altro senso | actually it's a forgive me in another sense |
| 05<br>06 | Andrea | quando fai qualcosa che non devi fare? | when you do something that you shouldn't do? |
| 07<br>08 | Matteo | [non è perdonami ti chiedo scusa perche ho fatto qualcosa | [no it's forgive me I'm sorry because I did something |
| 09<br>10 | Giulia | ***forgive me*** è perdonami ***I apology apologise*** é mi scuso | ***forgive me*** is forgive me and ***I apology apologise*** is I apologise |

| 11 | Andrea | [mi scuso | [I’m sorry |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12<br>13<br>14 | Matteo | oggi avevo imparato una nuova parola inglese ma me la sono scordata | today I learnt a new English word but I forgot it |
| 15<br>16<br>17 | Giulia | [laughing] quindi non l’hai imparata [laughing] essenzialmente l’hai solo sentita | [laughing] so you didn’t learn it [laughing] you just heard it basically |
| 18<br>19 | Andrea | [noi abbiamo imparato ***vio: vio:*** <.> ***violated*** | [we learnt ***vio: vio:*** <.> ***violated*** |
| 20 | Giulia | ***violated*** | ***violated*** |
| 21 | Matteo | [come se dice unghia in inglese? | [how do you say nail in English? |
| 22 | Andrea | ***nails*** | ***nails*** |
| 23<br>24 | Matteo | ***nails*** <..> non riuscivo a dirglielo a quello stronzo | ***nails*** <..> I was not able to tell that dickhead |
| 25<br>26 | Giulia | ma a chi <.> con chi ce l’hai? | but who <.> whom are you talking about? |
| 27<br>28 | Andrea | ***on the meantime*** *passame* una sigaretta | ***on the meantime*** *give me* a cigarette |
| 29 | Giulia | ***in the meantime*** | ***in the meantime*** |
| 30 | Andrea | passami una sigaretta | give me a cigarette |

Andrea starts this conversation by openly asking the meaning of a verb, ‘to forgive’ and its relation to another verb, ‘to apologise’, wondering about the uses of the two set phrases (lines 01-02). Despite the incorrectness of Matteo’s reply, Andrea follows his attempt to understand the difference between the two verbs. Giulia’s intervention is then accepted to resolve the issue (line 09-10). Among the three, Giulia is the most experienced speaker owing to her level and type of education and she is often seen as a provider of linguistic knowledge. However, in this segment, Andrea and Matteo seem to challenge each other on their language learning development, as we read in lines 12-14 and 18-19. Thus, Giulia’s attempt to be the linguistic problem solver is discouraged by the two participants and this is evident in line 25, when Matteo refuses to reply to Giulia’s question, and in the last turn (line 30) when Andrea ignores Giulia’s correction (line 29) by opting not to engage a second time in his translingual performance.

The linguistic education of the newly arrived migrants is not always as explicit as seen in the segment above. Moreover, for some participants, the learning process is not only linguistic in a strict sense. Learning a language means engaging with the socio-cultural system of the people who use the language. Therefore, becoming an expert migrant is not just a mere matter of language knowledge but it is a proof of engagement with the new world, as we observe in the next segment. Giovanni is a colleague of Maria. They both moved in 2015. Nevertheless, Giovanni has lived and studied in Barcelona and he had also spent several months in London while he was graduating.

**Segment 30. Cultural education**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01 | Giulia | tu come mai non bevi stasera? | why don't you drink tonight? |
| 02 | Giovanni | ***dry January*** | ***dry January*** |
| 03 | Giulia | ah è vero anche una mia alunna | ah it's true also a student of mine |
| 04 | Maria | eh? cos'è? | eh? what's that? |
| 05 | Giovanni | C*** un'ingenuità | C**such a naivety |
| 06<br>07 | Maria | ah che non bevi alcol per tutto gennaio? ma perchè? | ah you don't drink alcohol in January? but why? |
| 08<br>09 | Giulia | dopo le feste teoricamente | after the Christmas period usually |
| 10<br>11<br>12<br>13 | Giovanni | no in realtà è che ai pasti bevo un sacco quindi <.> per questo ho preso un ***soft drink*** che è ***all you can drink*** | no actually the fact is that I drink a lot while I eat <.> for this reason I took a ***soft drink*** which ***is all you can drink*** |

By not understanding the phrase "dry January" (line 02), Maria proves to be inexpert on a popular aspect of London's culture. *Dry January* expresses a social practice, which involves the avoidance of alcoholic drinks in January as a consequence of drinking too much during the Christmas period. Giovanni relates such absent expertise to Maria's naivety. He then engages in translanguaging when he wants to motivate his behaviour. From his last turn, though, we understand that the real reason for not drinking alcoholic drinks is not exactly in respect of the rules imposed by the social practice. Therefore, his first involvement in translanguaging acquires a performative character which establishes the diversity of the actors involved in the conversation. Maria shows herself to be capable of guessing the meaning of the phrase (lines 06-07). Although she is an extremely educated migrant who is supposed to know English, at the time of the recording, she was a recently arrived migrant. Therefore, her linguistic competence was not helpful in interpreting Giovanni's phrase. Since Giovanni is her colleague, she

cannot lose face by confirming her ignorance and, therefore, she makes an effort to change her position. The context (the fact that Giovanni is not drinking alcohol), in this case, helps her complete the discourse sequence. Nevertheless, she cannot avoid presenting herself as less integrated in London cultural habits. In this segment, we see the relation between linguistic and cultural competence. It is important to be seen by the other migrants as someone who belongs to the group.

Below, I present an extract of Lucio's interview where he narrates his linguistic acquisition process. He connects language competence with the necessity of acquiring independence, the most important value for a migrant in London, according to him.

**Segment 31. The absence of a linguistic helper**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Giulia | perchè andavi a scuola? non sapevi l'inglese per niente? | why were you going to school? didn't you know English at all? |
| 03<br>04<br>05<br>06<br>07<br>08<br>09<br>10<br>11<br>12<br>13<br>14<br>15 | Lucio | perchè non sapevo l'inglese e andando nel personale io quando sono venuto qua son venuto con la mia ex ragazza che lei invece l'inglese lo sapeva però ero cosciente che lei non era una ragazza per Londra fatta per Londra se ne sarebbe tornata da lì a poco quindi dovevo rendermi autosufficiente il prima possibile per poi arrangiarmi perchè avevo già calcolato il fatto che da lì a poco lei se ne sarebbe andata quindi:: era uno stimolo in più | because I didn't know English and going on a personal level when I came here I came with my ex-girlfriend who she instead knew it but I was aware that she was not a girl for London cut out for London she would have gone back in a short time so I had to make myself self-sufficient as soon as possible so that I could get by because I had already considered that she would have left soon and so:: it was one more incentive |

In London, Lucio lived a classroom-based learner experience. He went to school to attend an English language course. As he narrates, this choice was made on the basis of his own perception of his ex-girlfriend's character (lines 08-09). At the beginning of his narrative, Lucio discerns two reasons for learning the receiving country's language. Firstly, to fill a gap of ignorance (line 03). Secondly, to become self-sufficient (lines 11-12). He utters his statement without resentment, but plainly relates language knowledge to the necessity of surviving by himself (lines 13-14) without a linguistic helper in a new environment. Lucio promotes a positive attitude towards the English language by indirectly assessing its utility. In accordance with the literature on language learning motivation (see, among others, Dörnyei, 2001; Haubenthal, 2004), in the last line, he seems to suggest that the concreteness of the learning purpose prompted his learning success.

Similarly to Lucio, Cristina and Ciro learnt English throughout their migratory experience. Cristina's words are extremely important as they provide an interesting insight into the kind of linguistic skills a migrant need to acquire in London, as opposed to the ones actually taught in Italian schools.

**Segment 32. Australian English**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Giulia | conoscevi l'inglese prima di trasferirti a Londra? | did you know English before moving to London? |
| 03<br>04<br>05<br>06<br>07 | Cristina | scolastico di merda cioè non parlavo un cazzo di niente non volevo dire neanche ***hello how are you*** a nessuno quindi | the shitty school one I mean I used to speak a fucking nothing I didn't want to say not even a word not even ***hello how are you*** to anybody so |
| 08 | Giulia | eri timida | you were shy |
| 09<br>10 | Cristina | [laughing] ero una ragazza molto timida | [laughing] I was a very shy girl |
| 11 | Giulia | tu? | you? |
| 12<br>13 | Ciro | io stavo a ***hello how are you*** e qualche verbo ma proprio così | I was at the ***hello how are you*** and some verbs level but not more |
| 14<br>15<br>16 | Giulia | S** secondo te il tuo livello di inglese è migliorato da quando sei a Londra? | S** in your opinion has your level of English improved since you live in London? |
| 17 | Ciro | molto | a lot |
| 18 | Giulia | il tuo anche? | yours as well? |
| 19<br>20 | Cristina | capisco tutto anche quasi l'australiano | I understand everything even almost the Australian |

Cristina and Ciro had completely different education patterns. Cristina attended the best schools in her town. For high school, she went to a *liceo*, the type of school where humanities and classics are taught. She then studied law, completing a post-graduate degree. On the other hand, Ciro attended a vocational high school, where he studied to become a cook. It is interesting to note, though, that, despite this difference, they describe their level of English upon their arrival with similar phrases. This seems in agreement with what has been theorised by scholars who have assessed the linguistic competences of Italian youth (see 2.2. for references) and in contrast to those who have depicted the new Italian migrants as competent bilinguals (Vedovelli, 2015). Clearly, in line 12, Ciro follows Cristina's lead in the depiction of his lin-

guistic knowledge. However, Cristina is more critical of the education system. She characterises her English as ‘school English’ (line 03), adding narrative details regarding her first contact with the receiving country. The tone in line 08 is clearly sarcastic, as Cristina and Giulia have known each other for four years and the researcher was certain her linguistic block could not be attributed to Cristina’s, in actuality, non-existent shyness. In the last turn, Cristina adds some important information about the linguistic skills she acquired. By mentioning her understanding of the Australian variety of English, she acknowledges the existence of different varieties spoken in London and the challenge that this represents for linguistically less competent migrants. Likewise, in spontaneous conversations, the informants reflect on linguistic experiences linked to the presence of varieties and registers under the large umbrella of English.

**Segment 33. Innit?**

| 01 | Giulia | non sapevi ***comb***? | you didn’t know ***comb***? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 02 | Andrea | no | No |
| 03<br>04 | Giulia | e ti dirò di più il verbo pettinare è ***comb*** comunque | and I will tell you more the verb to comb is ***comb*** anyway |
| 05 | Matteo | ***innit?*** | ***innit?*** |
| 06 | Cristina | che è ***innit***? | what’s ***innit***? |
| 07<br>08<br>09 | Matteo | ti devo insegnare io l’inglese <.> oggi è venuto un nero americano alcolizzato | I have to teach you English <.> today a black American alcoholic came |
| 10 | Cristina | [***in***? | [***in***? |
| 11 | Matteo | ***innit*** | ***innit*** |
| 12 | Giulia | ***isn’t it*** | ***isn’t it*** |
| 13 | Cristina | beh che c’entra ***innit***? | well what about ***innit***? |
| 14<br>15<br>16<br>17<br>18<br>19<br>20<br>21<br>22<br>23<br>24<br>25 | Matteo | ma è come quando dicono [standard British accent] ***you know what I mean*** [London English] ***you kno’ wa' a mean*** che sembra che piangono tu li guardi e gli dici no non piangere che c’è che vuoi? vuoi il ***raviolo truffle*** te lo porto [low voice] ***a beer*** porco dio dimmi voglio una birra no [low moaning voice] ***a beer*** e dilla *‘sta* parola che cazzo ti costa lo sai che sono di un altro paese | but it’s like when they say [standard British accent] ***you know what I mean*** [London English] ***you kno’ wa' a mean*** that it seems like they are crying you look at them and you tell them no don’t cry what happened what do you want? do you want the ***truffle ravioli***? I’ll bring it you [low voice] ***a beer*** bloody hell tell me I want a beer no [low moaning voice] ***a beer*** and say this fucking word what the fuck does it cost |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 26<br>27 | | | you you know that I come from another country |
| 28 | Cristina | *mado'* comunque è vero | *gosh* it is true anyway |
| 29<br>30<br>31 | Matteo | [perchè io ti capisco uguale però sei un coglione mi stai sul cazzo | [because I understand as well but you are an asshole you fucking annoy me |

A sarcastic metalinguistic discussion serves as the prologue for the core part of the dialogue. Giulia shows her surprise at Andrea's ignorance of the translation of the word 'comb' (line 01). Since Andrea is bald, the tone is sarcastic. With Matteo's engagement in translanguaging, though, in line 05, the discussion follows a different direction. Matteo's use of a London English feature (Torgersen *et al.*, 2011), "innit", and Cristina's subsequent question about its meaning, allows Matteo to perform an (for him) unusual role. Previously, we saw Matteo acting as a learner. On the contrary, in this instance, he presents himself as a linguistically experienced speaker who is able to deal with the difficulties caused by the variety in the English language. However, as we understand from Matteo's turn in line 11, although he claims his teacher role (line 07), he seems unwilling to explain the feature he is using to Cristina. His engagement with this type of variety is only functional to his narrative. On the other hand, Giulia suggests an explanatory turn (line 12), which is, nevertheless, ignored as Matteo is leading the conversation towards his narrative regarding an episode that happened in his workplace. Although the link between the slang feature and the narrative is not immediately clear to the addressees, it then becomes more evident. The narrative seems to have two aims. The first concerns Matteo's intention to insert himself into a dialogue (initiated by Giulia and Andrea) that he was excluded from. The second function is to strengthen Matteo's performance as a competent multilingual speaker. Matteo's narrative is an identity performative act. In lines 08-09, he introduces the actors involved in the story. By depicting the customer negatively, he seems to assign him the role of the antagonist. However, in his longest turn, Matteo no longer mentions the customer. Instead, he expresses his understanding of a non-standard variety of English by providing an example. In line 17, he shows his ability in translanguaging by not only mixing two different languages but also varieties of the languages he learnt.[35] He firms

[35] I opted here for a nonstandard spelling transcription to show the difference between the two sentences without hindering readers' comprehension of the sentence. However, I also believe it is important to provide a phonetic transcription of such a non-standard utterance: [jʊ naʊ wɒ æ miːn] (while in standard English would be [jʊ nəʊ wɒt aɪ miːn]. In lines 21 and 23, the speaker utters the phrase as [e bɪə], marking the lack of realization of the post-vocalic alveolar trill /r/. The phrase in line 20, instead, is pronounced according to the pattern Italian speakers follow when uttering English words, which includes the alveolar trill (Gauci, 2009) and the syntactic structure respects Italian rules for adjectival positioning (Setti, 2003).

up his opinion by undertaking a hypothetical direct speech with customers who do not speak clearly (lines 19-25). It is fundamental to acknowledge that, in Matteo's view, the origin of the customers is not relevant, as he positions any deviation from the norm under a large umbrella. His exemplification of non-standard shows his perception of the distance between slang - which I interpreted as London English since he previously mentions 'innit' - and his interpretation of standard British English (Roach, 2004) or a standard American English accent (the latter encountered mainly through TV series). Only in line 22 does Matteo seem to return to the real episode that happened at the restaurant. He mocks the customer's accent by claiming that the customer's linguistic insensitivity hinders his work. Matteo's last turn evidences a special attitude. Matteo reclaims his linguistic competence (lines 29-31) by suggesting his superiority, being not only able to understand English but also able to cope with difficult situations created by the limited linguistic capacity of adapting and of accommodating to someone who is not an English mother tongue speaker.

The relation with the English language and English native speakers is articulated in controversial ways. However, this must not be understood as an objection to the language itself, which, as I have already explained, is mostly described as a resource. Such an attitude towards the receiving country's language is translated into admiration for those migrants who speak it competently. According to the participants, knowing English, and thus being able to engage in translanguaging, is a tool to perform roles precluded from those who do not have this linguistic competence. The importance and the role of English in the job market is undeniable and widely recognised worldwide (Park, 2011; Pennycook, 2007) and participants often related the knowledge of English to the possibility of becoming truly global citizens who would more easily be able to live wherever they want in the world. Linguistic knowledge is still seen as a factor to assess not only integration but also to establish power relations within the post-crisis migration. Furthermore, the absence of language competence can strengthen the perception of the internal diversity that characterises the post-2008 crisis wave. Reflecting on other migrants' inability can thus become an occasion to express evaluation and to present oneself, even implicitly, as superior to other members of the wave.

**Segment 34. Linguistic knowledge and integration**

| 01 | Alessandra | l'italiano a Londra [giggling] e:: | the Italian in London [giggling] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 02 | | ovviamente con il proprio gruppo | e::h obviously having their |
| 03 | | di italiani che ci sta perchè anche i | group of Italian people that it's |
| 04 | | miei amici sono italiani quindi | ok because even my friends are |
| 05 | | diventano la tua famiglia <.> però | Italian so they become your |
| 06 | | il non saper relazionarsi in altri | family <.> but not being able to |
| 07 | | ambiti che possa essere l'uscita | relate to others in other con- |
| 08 | | con i colleghi feste di lavoro o | texts such as the night out with |
| 09 | | semplicemente al pub e non | the colleagues or simply going |
| 10 | | riuscire ad andare oltre a: una | to a pub and not being able to |
| 11 | | battuta:: per me: cioè per me è | say something more than a:: |
| 12 | | imbarazzante <.> cioè non capisco | sentence::: for me it's embar- |
| 13 | | il motivo per cui queste persone | rassing <.> I mean I don't un- |
| 14 | | siano qua ci sta per motivi | derstand the reason why these |
| 15 | | lavorativi cioè magari c'è una | people are here it's ok work |
| 16 | | crescita professionale però non | reasons I mean maybe there is |
| 17 | | c'è una crescita personale | a professional growth but not a |
| 18 | | | personal one |

In describing the typical Italian migrant living in London, Alessandra is keen to forgive the propensity towards selecting friends on a national basis (lines 02-03). Nevertheless, she is firm in her judgment concerning the inadequacy in integrating into other contexts where people with different origins may gather. She therefore starts with her own experience, mentioning social gatherings with colleagues, and then shifts to a more general situation, a traditional British form of socialisation: the pub. It is important to note Alessandra's phrasing in describing the incompetence of such speakers. In line 06, she utters the verb *relazionarsi*, which I translated as "to relate to others". Alessandra does not immediately mention a linguistic inability. Nonetheless, she implicitly suggests that the impossibility of relating to others derives from linguistic inexpertise. Formulating this criticism with this verb, Alessandra underscores the social function of a language as a vehicle to prove speakers' capacity to insert themselves into new societies. We understand later that her judgment clearly concerns the language incompetence of this type of migrant (lines 09-11). Moreover, she shows the significance she attributes to the host country language since this seems to be the only tool for growing up, not only professionally, but also personally. According to her, knowing English allows the migrant to engage in a series of situations which may lead towards real, meaningful personal development. Her judgment also implies the contrary since, without this language knowledge, one cannot experience true personal growth. This segment demonstrates the value the knowledge of English can have in evaluating one's maturity, and one's achievements. Moreover, it shows how

speakers like Alessandra - educated and linguistically proficient - can perform a leading migratory role, considering themselves superior to others.

While Alessandra, in her reflection, was considering competence in the English language as a means and actual symbol of advancement, other speakers, like Lucio, see translanguaging itself as a tool to demonstrate an inclination towards learning and a willingness to integrate.

**Segment 35. The advantages of translanguaging**

| 01<br>02 | Giulia | ok <.> invece tua mamma vive qua giusto? | ok <.> while your mum lives here doesn't she? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 03 | Lucio | sì | yes |
| 04<br>05 | Giulia | con lei useresti queste parole? | would you use these words with her? |
| 06<br>07<br>08<br>09<br>10<br>11<br>12<br>13<br>14<br>15<br>16<br>17<br>18<br>19<br>20<br>21<br>22<br>23 | Lucio | ma l'avrei fatto all'inizio con l'intento di inculcarle in generale il concetto di dover sempre pensare o parlare il più possibile l'inglese proprio per darle modo di apprendere purtroppo abbiamo riscontrato che per ovvi motivi d'età e per ovvi motivi di abitudini <.> quella di non studiare o comunque di non imparare generalmente le cose non è una cosa possibile e quindi sarebbe un po' una cosa:: inutile da fare adesso quindi si parla anche con lei in italiano <.> poi ovviamente ci sono queste piccole terminologie che lei conosce ma comunque dirle queste parole in inglese comunque non porterebbe a nessun vantaggio | well I would have done it at the beginning with the aim of instilling the idea that she had to think always or speak English as much as possible to give her the chance to learn unfortunately we found out that for obvious reasons as the age or because of her habits <.> as the one of not studying or anyway of not learning in general the things it's not a doable thing and so it would be a thi::ng a bit useless to do now so we talk to her in Italian <.> then of course there are these little terms that she knows but anyway telling her these words in English would not lead to any advantage |
| 24<br>25<br>26<br>27 | Giulia | va bene <.> secondo te il mischiare un po' inglese italiano potrebbe considerarsi lo stile degli italiani a Londra? | good <.> in your opinion can we consider mixing a bit English and Italian the style of Italian people in London? |
| 28<br>29<br>30<br>31<br>32<br>33<br>34<br>35<br>36<br>37<br>38 | Lucio | io penso che sia soggettivo e da che tipo di persona sei <.> dipende anche da chi:: a chi ti rivolgi in quel momento cioè se lo fai sempre con tutti o se lo fai:: solo con determinati tipi di persone e basta <.> dipende perchè se il classico italiano lo stereotipo dell'italiano a Londra che va a portare in giro i vassoi in un ristorante si:: e magari in quel | I think that this is subjective and it depends on the kind of person you are <.> it depends on who::m you are addressing in that moment I mean if you do it always with everybody or if you only do:: it with some definite kind of people and that's it <.> it depends because if the typical Italian the stereotype of the Italian in London who goes around restaurants bringing trays |

| 39 | | momento vuole fare un po' lo sbruf- | ye::s and maybe in that moment he |
|---|---|---|---|
| 40 | | fone davanti a una persona che ma- | wants to act a bit as a show off in |
| 41 | | gari in Inghilterra c'è appena arri- | front of a person that maybe has |
| 42 | | vata <.> il fatto di tirar fuori qualche | just arrived in England <.> the fact |
| 43 | | parola di più in inglese quasi come | that you recall a few more English |
| 44 | | sembrare una persona vissuta e in- | words as if you almost want to look |
| 45 | | serita possa portargli apparenti | like an experienced and integrated |
| 46 | | vantaggi può essere una cosa nor- | person as if this can bring him |
| 47 | | male però di certo | some advantage it could be a nor- |
| 48 | | | mal thing sure |

The pretext for starting a reflection on translanguaging is provided by personal information I knew regarding the participant. Lucio's mother moved to London after her son and daughter migrated. She is representative of one silent group of migrants whom the FondazioneMigrantes (Licata, 2018) defines as "migranti maturi disoccupati" - 'unemployed mature migrants'.[36] These are Italians aged over fifty who decide to leave Italy after they lose their job or due to the presence of their children in another country. Lucio's consideration of his mother's learning pattern shows the dubiousness of having a member of a different generation included in the same linguistic community of post-2008 crisis migrants (for the definition of *linguistic community* see section 6.6.). In line 12, Lucio himself suggests that one of the reasons for his mother's inability to engage with translanguaging is her age. Here, he implicitly introduces a kind of *other* that many participants identify as well. Nonetheless, as this topic is thoroughly addressed in section 5.6., I do not dwell on it here. The speaker admits he stopped engaging in translanguaging with her, insisting on the pointlessness of such an activity due to his mother's attitude towards learning (lines 13-15). Lucio minimises his mother's linguistic competence by reducing it to knowledge of "small terminology" (lines 20-21). In lines 22-23, Lucio presents translanguaging, and the involvement in this practice, in terms of advantages and he introduces a consideration he then develops in his longest turn. By admitting that using translanguaging (which I describe in my interviews as using English words and phrases in order to be understood by my participants) with his mother would not be advantageous, he introduces the idea of the functions of this practice and the advantages speakers can obtain if involved in it.

[36] When I started my research, according to the official statistic data, the number of older migrants was almost irrelevant. Therefore, I decided not to include people aged over thirty-five. However, I think it is important to acknowledge the existence of this category of new Italian migrants as further research could include them in a study of the linguisticrepertoire and practices of the post-crisis wave, although these may be seen as a different type of speakers.

In the second part of the extract, I try to elicit Lucio's opinion on the relation between translanguaging and the migratory experience. He refuses to follow my suggested connection in order to highlight the subjectivity of the phenomenon I study (lines 29-30). He stresses the idea that translanguaging can be a choice that can present diverse outcomes according to the profile of the speakers. Lucio returns to the figure of the stereotypical Italian with the purpose of exemplifying a possible linguistic situation. In lines 33-37, re-proposing the image from segment 3, he diminishes this type of migrant with his description. The waiter figure is thus presented as "someone who carries trays" and who would engage in translanguaging only to obtain an advantage. Lucio seems to perform the role of the expert on this subject, demonstrating his ability by commenting on the social norms linked to such linguistic practice. He mentions the possibility of achieving results by engaging in translanguaging, addressing someone who has less expertise in the migratory experience (lines 40-43). Lucio's opinion is firm and well articulated. Lucio points out an extremely important issue discussed in the literature review and at the beginning of this chapter. Generalising about the functions of translanguaging and the reasons for engaging in such a practice is impossible, as the informants themselves understand that the socio-linguistic profiles of this wave's members are so diverse as to prevent the development of linguistic rules applicable to the entire community. Therefore, translanguaging acquires different indexical and metaphorical meanings. For this reason, my research cannot present claims of generalisability or completeness as regards the linguistic repertoire and behaviour of the entire post-2008 crisis wave. Rather, the analysis aims to show possible scenarios in which translanguaging is exploited. It may seem contradictory, then, that the focus of the following sub-section is on the concept of migrants' style and its translingual nature. It is therefore important to specify that, when I talk about such a style I refer to a style in which translanguaging is a possibility, compared to other styles (or registers) where this option is not plausible.

### 5.5.1. Translanguaging and migrants' style: the past and present of a linguistic practice

This sub-section is dedicated to participants' evaluations of translanguaging in relation to the changes in their linguistic repertoire subsequent to their migration. Here, I present extracts in which the informants acknowledge the existence of communal linguistic traits and are open to the possibility of engaging in translingual practices where all the languages at the disposal of the migrants are exploited to achieve communicative and personal goals. This sub-section leads towards the last crucial element linked to translanguaging, *othering*. As explained

in section 3.4, othering is an important process to delineate identity profiles and to strengthen the concept of membership.

For migrant speakers, translanguaging becomes a daily practice. As we read in the following segment, they go beyond the discernment of languages, admitting the naturalness of the inclusion of the new linguistic resources.

**Segment 36. Busy**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03 | Giulia | nel senso che ti capita che usi<br>parole che:: quando eri in<br>Italia neanche: conoscevi? | I mean does it happen to you to use<br>words tha::t when you were in Italy<br>you didn't even know? |
| 04 | Ciro | sì:: | ye::s |
| 05 | Giulia | tipo? | such as? |
| 06 | Ciro | ***off busy*** certo è normale | ***off busy*** sure it's normal |
| 07<br>08 | Giulia | oppure non so è cambiato il<br>modo:: usi di più il dialetto? | or I don't know have you changed<br>way:: do you use dialect more? |
| 09<br>10<br>11 | Ciro | no no queste cose ***off busy*** le<br>uso spesso cioè come se fosse<br>normale in italiano | no no these things ***off busy*** I use<br>them more often I mean as it were<br>normal in Italian |
| 12<br>13 | Giulia | ok <...> tu? hai cambiato il tuo<br>modo di parlare? | ok <...> and you? have you changed<br>your way of speaking? |
| 14<br>15<br>16<br>17<br>18<br>19<br>20<br>21<br>22<br>23<br>24 | Cristina | di brutto cambio tra inglese e<br>barese <.> ma sì:: ci sono un<br>sacco di parole che:: cioè alla<br>fine voglio dire rendono:: <.><br>essendo una lingua così<br>semplice alla fine voglio dire<br>con una parola puoi dire un<br>concetto che in Italiano<br>diresti con una frase tipo<br>***busy*** che vuol dire mille cose<br>***anyway no way*** | big time I switch between English<br>and Barese <.> but ye::s there are a<br>lot of words tha::t I mean at the end<br>of the day they make more sense::<br><.> because it is such a simple lan-<br>guage at the end of the day I mean<br>with one word you can say a concept<br>that In Italian you would say with a<br>phrase such ***busy*** that means a thou-<br>sand things ***anyway no way*** |

Ciro, encouraged to reflect on his changed linguistic repertoire, mentions "off" and "busy" (line 06) as examples of the words which have smoothly been integrated into his repertoire. Ciro's attitude regarding these changes is important. He is the proof that, once the speakers stop perceiving the separation of the languages they exploit, translanguaging has successfully happened. If we interpret translanguaging as a creative force (see references in 3.6.), we can understand Ciro's words in lines 10-11 as the perfect example of such a process. For him, English, under the form of lexical insertions, is not only mixed with Italian, but it becomes

so "normal" as to be perceived as monolingual Italian. This agrees with Canagarajah's (2011) definition, who maintained that translanguaging is realised when the diverse languages that form multilingual speakers' repertoires are perceived as "an integrated system" (Canagarajah, 2011: 401). For this speaker, the relevant languages integrated in his new system are Italian and English. In fact, Ciro, who is also a dialectal speaker, rejects my suggestion that he reflects on his use of dialect, considering the intervention of English as a feature that signals a radical change.

On the other hand, Cristina, who only used dialect metaphorically (Gumperz, 1958; 1964; 1982), is keen to suggest that, in her linguistic repertoire, dialect occupies a new position (lines 14-15). While for Ciro dialect was (when he was in Italy) and still is the norm, since it is his actual L1 and Italian is his L2, for Cristina Italian is the L1, and dialect was used only to mark her regional origin. In the interview, Ciro dismisses this aspect, whereas Cristina, whose family condemns the use of dialects owing to belonging to an upper class, had the opportunity to explore new uses and functions of dialect only after migration. This may have happened since, in London, she had to accommodate to different types of people coming from different regions and social classes and exhibiting diverse levels of education. Therefore, Cristina may have developed an increased sensitivity to the importance of her local linguistic identity and the power of this resource. Nevertheless, perhaps because Cristina is aware that the focus of my research is on the mixing of English and Italian, she does not dwell further on the uses of dialect. Instead, she reflects autonomously on the reasons for using English. As with other participants, Cristina sees English as a practical language, simpler than Italian (lines 18-19). Moreover, she mentions the idea of *rendere* (line 17). *Rendere* has a twofold meaning in Italian. Firstly, the verb has an economic interpretation. Thus, we could translate it as "to yield a profit" (Collins Italian Dictionary, 2018). In addition, in spoken Italian, this verb means "to convey a clearer sense". Hence, combining the two shades of interpretation, we might understand that English is a language that confers benefits and enriches the Italian language by providing new semantic options. The informants see English as an economical language that offers the possibility of communicating more rapidly. English is interpreted as the language of speed and simplification, characteristics that seem to be in contrast with the Italian language and the Italian mindset. This idea regarding the simplicity of English is widespread in my dataset. English, compared to Italian, is understood as a more direct language with a more basic morpho-syntactic structure. Moreover, the informants consider Italian a language with a richer vocabulary. In this case, Cristina mentions the many possible translations of 'busy', which, in Italian, can

be translated as *occupato*, *impegnato*, *indaffarato*, *pieno di impegni*, *affollato*, *pieno* (Collins Italian Dictionary, 2018) depending on the noun it modifies.

Another participant, Giulio, confirm the spread of some features when asked to reflect on the style of Italians in London.

**Segment 37. The busy time**

| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05 | Giulia | mi dici se ci sono delle parole che ti vengono più spesso? che associ: allo stile dell'italiano a Londra? che hai sentito più spesso? | can you tell me if there are words that you say more often? that you would li:nk with the style of the Ital-ian in London? that you have heard more often? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 06<br>07<br>08 | Giulio | [eating] <.....> sì <...> ***busy time*** <.> ***busy*** <...> poi non so se è un modo di dire ***chop chop*** | [eating] <.....> yes <...> ***busy time*** <.> ***busy*** <...> than I don't know if it's an idiom ***chop chop*** |
| 09 | Giulia | che? | what? |
| 10<br>11<br>12 | Giulio | non hai mai sentito ***chop chop***? nel ***busy time*** che devi fare ***chop chop***? | haven't you ever heard ***chop chop***? during the ***busy time*** that you have to do ***chop chop***? |
| 13 | Giulia | no mai sentita | I never heard it |
| 14<br>15<br>16<br>17 | Giulio | vai vai ***hurry hurry*** <..> e:::m <..> che altro? va beh credo che il termine ***busy*** sia quello più la cosa più universale | go go hurry hurry <..> e:::m <..> what else? well I think that the word ***busy*** is the most universal thing |

For Giulio, the style of Italian migrants is exemplified by the terminology linked to a phrase, "busy time" (lines 06). Giulio, like Ciro, is representative of the part of the wave that works in the hospitality sector. Therefore, he connects the linguistic feature to an important social aspect that characterises the life of many migrants. As I suggest my belonging to a different sub-group, owing to my lack of understanding of what Giulio addresses as a common feature, he pushes me to involve in translanguaging trying to insert me in his own linguistic world (lines 10-12). Giulio does not explain to me the meaning of the phrase I do not know, but he shows me the usage. Through such practice, I am offered the opportunity to enter Giulio's professional linguistic repertoire, despite my distance from it. He does not add any other example of the migrants' style as 'busy' seems to contain all the indexicality necessary to explain Italian migrants' life in London. This lexical item is quite transversal and it has the power to connect migrants belonging to different sub-group, as we see in the following segment.

While some speakers experience translanguaging as the natural and positive outcome of their engagement in a transnational life, others expressed reservation about such practices due to the indexical meaning it has acquired in the homeland (Mazzaferro, 2017). Moreover, as we see, Italian migrants' translanguaging is limited in creativity since some structural mixing rules are incompatible with the socio-cultural set of speakers' values.

**Segment 38. Super busy and *matchare***

| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05 | Giulia | ok <.> e secondo te nel tuo modo di parlare c'è il fatto di mettere parole che sono un pezzo in inglese e un pezzo in italiano? | ok <.> and in your opinion in your way of speaking there is the fact of putting in the middle words that are a bit in English and a bit in Italian? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 06 | Maria | cioè tipo a metà? | you mean half and half? |
| 07<br>08 | Giulia | sì tipo un miscuglio delle due tipo:: che ne so ***busissimo*** | yes like a mixing of the two like:: I don't know ***busissimo*** |
| 09 | Maria | ah ***super busy*** tipo? | ah such as ***super busy***? |
| 10<br>11 | Giulia | diresti ***super busy***? non ***busissimo***? | would you say ***super busy***? not ***busissimo***? |
| 12 | Maria | no no ***super busy*** | no no ***super busy*** |
| 13 | Giulia | però tipo ***applicare***? | but like ***applicare***? |
| 14<br>15 | Maria | [***matchare***! però non mi piace è raccapricciante secondo me | [***matchare***! but I don't like it it's gruesome in my opinion |
| 16<br>17<br>18 | Giulia | ma è raccapricciante perchè? ci hai mai pensato? lo associ a un livello culturale:: | but it's gruesome why? have you ever thought about it? do you link it to a cultural leve::l |
| 19<br>20<br>21<br>22<br>23<br>24<br>25<br>26<br>27<br>28<br>29<br>30<br>31<br>32<br>33 | Maria | sì forse sì <.> cioè a me la lingua <.> forse perchè a me piace leggere va beh anche per gli studi che abbiam fatto <.> per me è molto importante che uno parli bene cioè a me quando una persona parla bene mi affascina tantissimo molto cioè proprio quindi:: anche mantenere ben distinte le lingue e parlarle bene entrambe secondo me è una cosa importante quindi poi ovviamente su di me io cerco di evitarlo il più possibile cioè tipo va beh a parte ***mixare*** cioè ***mixare*** lo dici perchè oramai è entrato comunque nel | yes maybe yes <.> I mean I like the language <.> maybe because I like reading well also for the studies we did <.> for me it's very important that one speaks well I mean when a person speaks well I'm really fascinated I mean really so:: even keeping distinct the languages and speaking them both well it's an important thing in my opinion so obviously for my part I try to avoid it as much as possible I mean a part from ***mixare*** I mean ***mixare*** you say it because now it |

| 34<br>35 | | vocabolario: ma ***matchare*** mi dà proprio uh!! | entered the vocabulary anyway: but ***matchare*** makes me go uh!! |
|---|---|---|---|

In this segment, I purposely suggest a variant – “busissimo” - that Italians in London do not commonly accept (line 08). However, I opted for such a realisation in order to assess Maria’s ability to understand my reference and provide an instance accepted by post-2008 crisis migrants. As we will read in a minute, my realisation follows a translingual process associated with the style of migrants belonging to the other waves, such as the post-Second World War wave. Therefore, it is not surprising that Maria discards my suggestion and proposes the variant familiar to her, “super busy” (line 09). As in this part of the interview we were discussing the mixing of English and Italian within the same lexical item, which in technical terms we would describe as the realisation of integrated and adapted borrowings, I indicate a verb Maria had uttered previously in the interview as an example of such a phenomenon (line 13). Maria, however, ignores my proposal and provides a different example. Her choice is motivated by the need to express a negative evaluation of this type of translingual realisation. She uses a strong adjective, *raccapricciante* (‘gruesome’, line 15), to connote the translingual item and she declares her refusal to approve of the style of the other migrants living in London. Maria offers an explanation which aligns with my hypothesis. Maria’s cultural level is extremely high while this kind of realisation, as we will see, is indexical of dynamics characterising language mixing in historical Italian communities abroad (see 2.4. for references). While for Ciro and Cristina (segment 36) mixing became the norm and they seemed to appreciate the possibility conveyed by such a process, Maria describes the mixing in negative terms, and negatively evaluates the inability to keep the languages distinct. She herself links her attitude to her educational background. Nonetheless, even for a person like Maria, who despises such realisations, negating the involvement in translanguaging is impossible. In line 32, she admits that some items can be accepted due to their acceptance into the vocabulary. Commonality and frequency of use, thus, seems to be the key for the acceptance of this phenomenon for people with a very high level of education. The participants in the following segment suggest a similar stream of thought. Federico, Daniele and Fabio are northern Italian migrants. Daniele and Fabio moved to London to complete their studies. They are both highly educated migrants. Daniele moved to London in 2008 while Federico and Fabio moved in 2014. Federico moved to change his life.

**Segment 39. Correct Italian**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04 | Giulia | ok <..> secondo voi da quando siete a Londra quando parlate in italiano parlate in modo diverso? | ok <..> in your opinion since you have moved to London whe you speak in Italian do you speak in a different way? |
| 05<br>06<br>07<br>08<br>09<br>10<br>11<br>12<br>13<br>14<br>15<br>16 | Federico | ogni tanto non ti viene la parola in italiano quindi usi quella in inglese e la traduzione esatta di quella in inglese non c'è in italiano come diceva prima A** dall'***interview*** che dici ***intervista*** che poi non è così oppure quando dici ***application*** poi dici ***applicare*** che comunque non è la stessa cosa: | sometimes you can't recall the Italian word so you use the Eng-lish one and there isn't an exact translation of the English one in Italian as A** was saying earlier from the ***interview*** that you say ***intervista*** that then it's not like that or when you say ***application*** than you say ***applicare*** that any-way it's not the same thing |
| 17 | Giulia | ok | ok |
| 18<br>19<br>20<br>21<br>22<br>23<br>24<br>25 | Daniele | no cerco sempre di parlare l'italiano corretto comunque l'unica cosa è quando si tratta di termini tecnici devo piegare sull'inglese perchè sinceramente non so se esistano in italiano o come si dicano | no I try to speak always correct Italian anyway the only thing is when it concerns technical terms I need to turn to English because honestly I don't know if they exist in Italian or how would you say them |
| 26<br>27<br>28 | Fabio | sì lo stesso anzi peggio li italianizzo che è una cosa penso orribile | yes the same actually worst I Ital-ianise them that it's a terrible thing I believe |
| 29 | Giulia | [giggling] ok però lo fai? | [giggling] well but you do it? |
| 30 | Fabio | sì soprattutto al lavoro | yes especially at work |
| 31 | Daniele | a va beh sì [giggling] ***skippalo*** | a well yes [giggling] ***skip it*** |

Even in this case, the speakers seem to be extremely aware of the phenomena signalling the changes in their linguistic repertoire. Federico offers his explanation of the semantic shift occurring in the words commonly used by post-2008 crisis migrants. He says that "it's not the same thing" (lines 15-16) to explain that the meaning attributed to the Italian word is not the one recognised by monolinguals. He also explains the origin of the shift, since he mentions the sources inspiring it ("interview" for *intervista*, lines 11-12, and "application" for *applicare*, in line 14). Such an awareness is relevant because it proves that speakers reflect on their new style, sometimes evaluating it negatively, and sometimes justifying the process as a normal

consequence of their migration. I can say these are common features, as we will later see, because *applicare*, for instance, is adopted by Maria, who does not know the participants involved in the segment above. The recourse to loanshifts is not a new process for Italian migrants. However, compared to the type of loanshifts produced in the past, post-2008 crisis migrants appear open to accepting only those related to their professional life. Daniele, for instance, exhibits a harsh attitude regarding translanguaging, placing it in opposition to "speaking correct Italian" (lines 18-19). Daniele interprets translanguaging as a necessity, and not as a creative possibility and it is accepted as a reality that one cannot avoid. Fabio too expresses a negative opinion of his behaviour, openly judging his style (line 26). However, both Daniele and Fabio ultimately have to admit their involvement with this practice, which appears to be acceptable only in the migratory context.

These participants immediately agree on the example to provide. Federico mentions these loanshifts without explaining their meaning by taking for granted other speakers' comprehension. Since I am a member of the same wave, Federico assumes I could have already heard these instances, and, therefore, he does not need to remind me that *intervista* in Italian is used only for journalism, and not for job interviews. Similarly, there is no need to explain that *applicare* does not mean 'to apply for a job', but 'to put on', or 'to implement' or, in the reflexive form, 'to commit' (Collins Italian Dictionary, 2018). The understanding here derives from our shared belonging. Similarly, participants can joke with me about the migrants' style, basing their joke on our shared membership, as we see in the segment below. Relevant features describing Stefano have been already provided in the analysis of segment 14.

**Segment 40. A parody of the style of the group**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Giulia | io sono andata solo una volta qui: a | I have been the::re just once |
| 03<br>04 | Stefano | [ci hanno ***chargiato*** un po' tanto | [they ***charged*** us a bit too much |
| 05 | Giulia | [laughing] | [laughing] |
| 06 | Stefano | però il cibo era | but the food was |
| 07 | Giulia | era ***good***? | was ***good***? |
| 08<br>09 | Stefano | [laughing] era buono era un ***fine dining taste*** | [laughing] it was good it was a ***fine dining taste*** |

Stefano realises an adapted borrowing, which is also realised by another participant, Marco (segment 9), who does not know Stefano. Moreover, my observation suggests that this

borrowing is widespread within the post-2008 crisis wave. For this reason, in the context of segment 40, it becomes symbolic of the group style and it offers an opportunity to ironically engage with that group style. Before starting this recording, Stefano and I had discussed the purposes of my research. Although I have been always extremely vague about the specific aims of my data collection in order to not influence my participants, Stefano perfectly understood the context of the study, and he ironically showed his engagement with the subject of my investigation. Giulia's reply and agreement on the involvement in translanguaging triggers Stefano's final turn and his code-switching (line 09). Engaging with this practice allows the participants to play with a well-known social identity, that of the Italian migrant. As we will read in the following paragraph, ancient Italian migratory history yields a range of identities which the contemporary migrants can appropriate or refuse.

The fact that some participants consider translanguaging a corrupting practice that deviates from the standard norm seems in contrast with usual youth judgments on language mixing (Li Wei, 2011; Li Wei and Zhu Hua, 2013b). However, in the Italian case, discarding translingual instances can have a profound value, and the reasons for this are rooted in Italian migration history and the rhetoric that it developed. Although studies on this have not been published and my research is not focused on this aspect, it is not inappropriate to claim that previous generations of Italian migrants who presented those socio-cultural characteristics (described in sub-section 2.3.1.) were involved in certain types of translingual practices that are sceptically evaluated by this generation of migrants. I have already mentioned that post-2008 crisis migrants refuse the adaptation of borrowing unless they want to play with indexical identities (references in 3.2.1.). Although I have claimed on multiple occasions that post-2008 crisis migrants do not have contact with the previous generations of migrants, they are perfectly aware of the style of the previous waves due to the narrative that has been generated about Italian migration.

**Segment 41. Different but not so different**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06 | Giulia | ma anche pensando non so ai::<br>agli immigrati in America dei<br>primi del novecento avresti in<br>mente più o meno che queste<br>cose le facevano anche loro? cioè<br>questo modo di parlare un po'::: | but even thinking I don't know to::<br>the early twentieth century immi-<br>grants in America would you<br>acknowledge that more or less they<br>were doing these things as well? I<br>mean this way of talking a bi::t |
| 07<br>08 | Giulio | [ma sicuramente sì un po'<br>dai film un po' da da dai racconti | [well surely yes a bit from the<br>movies a bit from from the tales but |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 09<br>10<br>11<br>12<br>13 | | va beh ma perchè io ce li ho parenti immigrati anche in America che avevano questo:: a parte le cadenze che poi si mischiano | well because I have relatives who migrated also in America who used to have thi::s a part from the accents that mix up then |
| 14<br>15 | Giulia | ma secondo te noi parliamo nella stessa loro maniera ora? | but in your opinion do we speak in their same way now? |
| 16<br>17<br>18<br>19<br>20<br>21 | Giulio | <..> no <…> no:: secondo me è più: è proprio u::n:: <.> oddio non lo so forse per qualche termine l'hai: <.> cioè tipo ***shred*** cioè noi diciamo ***shreddare*** <.> che non esiste | <..> no <…> no:: in my opinion it's more: it's actually a:::: <.> o god I don't know maybe for some terms you have: it <.> I mean like ***shred*** I mean we say ***shreddare*** <.> that doesn't exist |
| 22 | Giulia | [m: ok | [m: ok |
| 23<br>24<br>25<br>26<br>27<br>28<br>29<br>30 | Giulio | ***shreddare*** <.> o ***shredda*** <.> viene di uso comune non lo so forse perchè è più semplice cioè è più immediato da da dire però no io penso che oggi noi piuttosto oggi facciamo appunto quello che studi tu la questione proprio di inserire parole: | ***shreddare*** <.> or ***shredda*** <.> it's in the common use I don't know maybe because it's simpler I mean it's more immediate to to say but no I think that nowadays we actually today we do exactly what you study the matter of actually inserting wo:rds |
| 31 | Giulia | inserire frasi? | inserting phrases? |
| 32 | Giulio | frasi | Phrases |

Giulio not only has access to this style indirectly, through movies, but also directly, as he claims to have relatives who migrated to the USA. Owing to the constant migratory flow from Italy, this situation is not uncommon. Giulio begins his reflection by stating the separateness of the phenomena produced by his generation and the previous ones (lines 16-17). Nonetheless, once he thinks about the integration and adaptation process which verbal borrowings undergo (lines 19-20), he cannot sustain a complete separation of the two styles. As Cristina (segment 36), even Giulio motivates the engagement in translanguaging in order to create a simpler language (line 25) in which the simplicity is provided by English. The speaker is determined to evidence a difference from the past, and, therefore, he discards the example to claim that the style of this generation is characterised by different phenomena. By assuming that my research focuses only on the insertion of unintegrated and unadapted lexical items and phrases, he affirms that the post-2008 crisis migrants' linguistic repertoire consists of such realisations. With such discussion about the differences between the style of the previous generations and contemporary migrants, the speakers implicitly began to undertake a process of

othering. The identification of an *other* far away in time allows this wave to determine the structural rules governing their translingual practices. In addition, they identify other types of *others* to metaphorically draw the borders of their non-community.

### 5.6. Othering as a technique to determine group identity

Social theories suggest that the perceived existence of a group is determined by its distinction from the *other* (references in 3.4.). The *other* shapes and informs the perception the members of the group have of their identity and of the existence of the group itself. In Italian migration studies, the approach to this topic is very traditional and the *other* generally coincides with the host country's population. However, recent studies on contemporary migration highlight the fluidity of migratory flows, the uncertainty of the settlement, and the super-diversity of the contexts into which communities arrive (Bauman, 2011). The unresolvable puzzle regarding the true nature of *us* and *them* represents a challenge for researchers in this field. As we will see, the Italian case in London aligns with these new scenarios. I have already explored the blurriness of the ontology of *us*, showing the difficulties Italian migrants face in identifying the national character and in accepting it. Furthermore, since the new Italian flux is not isolated but is part of a larger European phenomenon (King *et al*., 2016), studies on the new Italian mobility have underscored migrants' propensity to socialise with other similar young migrants coming from southern or eastern European countries. In this case, then, the nature of *us* presents a European matrix that is suggested in contrast to the receiving country (Conti, 2012; Scotto, 2015a).

In addition, with London being a multicultural hub (references in 3.4.1.), the identification of a clear *them* is a more complex task than it was for small communities settled in the UK after the war. Although the informants highlighted the presence of a *other* that coincides with their interpretation of the receiving society, they also admitted to difficulties in discerning the British national character as well as one specific to London. Most of the participants see London as a city formed of migrant groups and they were not able to meet many British people to enter into contact with regularly. Consequently, the few British people mentioned in the conversations symbolically embody the *other* traditionally identified in Italian migration studies. As I will better discuss in the last chapter, I noted that in a context in which the nature of the *other* and of *us* is not clear, it is hard to find traditionally studied expressions of identity, such as a dualistic migratory identity. Dualism, as monolingual views of bilingualism, cannot be applied to this group of migrants for different reasons. Firstly, their national identity is challenged and constantly renegotiated; secondly, the London population is not a homogeneous

*other*, but hosts thousand of *others* that mixed; thirdly, varieties of Italian and varieties of English mix fluidly and speakers are aware of the possibilities of mixing them all. Most importantly, as explained in the following sub-section, the participants suggested two diverse types of *others* that are more relevant in the development and negotiation of their translingual style, the vehicle of their migratory identity.

### 5.6.1. The unconventional others

The strong transnational bond which most of my participants have with the homeland generates occasions to determine diverse *others*. It is important to remember that the identification of the *other*, according to Antaki and Widdicombe's theory of *Membership Categorisation Analysis* (1998), promotes an identity process, whereby the characteristics of one's own, or a group's, identity emerges from a comparison with such *others* (for more references, see 3.3.). If we adopt a linguistic perspective to understand the post-2008 crisis migrants' social identity, we will see that such *others* acquire relevance in determining the boundaries of the group. I refer here to a group social identity which emerged only when linguistic matters were explored. Although this seems to be in contrast with the individualistic claims analysed in section 5.2., this only suggests the relevance of a linguistics-driven study in understanding non-homogeneous late modern migrant groups. Owing to the absence of cultural and social reference points for this new wave, the linguistic identity of the group constitutes a distinctive feature that determines the nature of the wave in opposition to other speakers. The participants highlighted the presence of two types of *others* with whom they believe they are not free to engage in translanguaging practices, for different reasons. The first *other* is represented by older relatives and the parents of the informants, who are not included in translanguaging dynamics due to their different linguistic skills. The peers who remained in Italy represent the second *other*. They seem to be excluded from these practices owing to the cultural distance that separates them from the modified mindset of the informants after the migration. I start my discussion with the latter group - the peers.

In section 5.5., we saw that diverse linguistic competence is a criterion already used to highlight the internal diversity of the wave. In that case, however, the inability to speak and use English properly was a factor, firstly, in determining the difference between more experienced and less experienced migrants, and, secondly, in highlighting a different approach to migration. Those unable to speak were implicitly inserted into the category of least-likely-to-integrate, and, therefore, appear less keen to initiate the settlement process. Even in this case, we find peers evaluating peers, and, in particular, the evaluation included members of the same

wave who thus lived similar experiences. Slightly different is the consideration of the peers who remained in Italy. In this case, not only the diverse language skills, but also the absence of commonality in experience prevent the migrants from using translanguaging with their peers in Italy. Learning English and engaging in translanguaging are signals of growth and the process of change that the migrants feel they have gone through. When interrogated, they all associated their behavioural transformation with the London lifestyle and its multicultural nature that affected their way of thinking, their attitude towards diversity, and the uncertainty of life. Therefore, those who remained in the homeland are usually not involved in translanguaging because, for them, the mixing would not have any symbolic function. Translanguaging is entangled with this change. It is part of the process itself, and, therefore, it is not for people who do not belong to the wave.

Some participants pointed out that speakers in Italy can easily present themselves as international workers, and as global business people, by engaging in simple instances of translanguaging. Nevertheless, they also reflected on the falsehood of such performance if there is no true language knowledge and a true affinity with this mindset. For instance, Giulio highlights an important difference in the determination of the *other* who can be involved in or excluded from translanguaging. His previous turn concerned the possibility of accepting the exploitation of English from Italian people who, for professional reasons, have contact with the rest of the world. This professional figure was compared with the farmer who sells vegetables at the market in Giulio's small town, and who, thus, would not need English at all. However, he then distinguishes an additional other, by adopting his own translanguaging as an exemplary case.

**Segment 42. The friend in Italy**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04 | Giulia | ma a livello proprio di <..> regole <.> sul poterlo fare oppure no ti senti che con l'italiano a Londra è più spontaneo? | but at the level actually of <..> rules <.> about being allowed to do it or not do you feel that with an Italian in London it's more spontaneous? |
| 05<br>06<br>07<br>08<br>09<br>10 | Giulio | assolutamente cioè vedi io con te posso dire ***open mind*** <..> all'amico mio a B** non gli dico ***open mind*** gli dico gli dico <.> non mi viene! non mi viene in italiano <..> di mente aperta | absolutely I mean see with you I can say ***open mind*** <..> to my friend from B** I don't say ***open mind*** I say I say <.> I can't recall it in Italian <.> open mind |

Giulio establishes a connection with me, situating me within the researched group. This connection is stressed in contrast with the distance from an exemplar friend who still lives in

his hometown. Previously, to describe those who are allowed to do translanguaging, Giulio used the phrase “open mind”. According to him, only those with an open mind can accept the changes that have happened to his linguistic repertoire and the open-mindedness of such people is determined by their global lifestyle. Consequently, when asked to reflect on the possibility of engaging in translanguaging more freely for speakers who undergo the same experience, Giulio adopts this item as a case in point. In doing so, he spontaneously introduces an *other*, the friend from his town that he would not engage in translanguaging with (lines 06-07). Nevertheless, Giulio represents evidence of the difficulty of avoiding this practice once it becomes part of your repertoire (lines 08-09).

In other segments, the hypothetical lack of linguistic competence of peers in Italy appears not to be the only reason for avoiding translingual practices with them. In the words of highly educated participants, we already perceived a common Italian attitude towards the mixing of language. Italy has always promoted a conservative linguistic policy (Rogato, 2008). Moreover, as we saw (5.5.1.), the translingual style of previous generations of migrants became part of Italian cultural knowledge, acquiring a strong indexical meaning. In the reaction of Nicola’s friends, we can read the Italian mindset on language mixing.

**Segment 43. The friends’ jokes**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02 | Giulia | e riesci poi quando torni in Italia a non usarle? | and are you able not to use them when you go back to Italy? |
| 03 | Nicola | no | No |
| 04 | Giulia | no? ok | no? ok |
| 05<br>06 | Nicola | infatti gli amici miei mi prendono sempre in giro | indeed my friends make always fun of me |
| 07 | Giulia | ti prendono in giro? | do they make fun of you? |
| 08<br>09<br>10<br>11<br>12 | Nicola | sì <.> non uso tantissimi termini <.> penso veramente di poterli contare <.> però a volte sì gli amici miei si fanno veramente un sacco di risate | yes <.> I don’t use many terms <.> I think I could really count them <.> but sometimes yes my friends laugh a lot |

By keeping his transnational linguistic identity when he is in Italy, Nicola becomes the subject of his friends’ jokes. In line 03, he admits the inability to accommodate his linguistic repertoire when back in Italy. Although the friends’ laughter could be seen as a sign of banter, the reaction of his friends, spontaneously narrated, marks the separation between those who stay in Italy and the interviewed speaker. Italian attitudes towards linguistic innovation may

affect the peers' reactions. In this case, the *other* has an amused reaction to translanguaging that determines a particular distance. The association between Nicola's repertoire and the translingual style of the previous generations of migrants may also be a reason for the friends' amusement. In addition, Nicola, by using this style, performs a persona his friends could not entirely understand and approve of. His friends could misinterpret Nicola's linguistic identity owing to their cultural mindset, which has not been moulded by any migratory experience. In line 08, Nicola feels the need to justify his linguistic repertoire, minimising his deviation from the Italian norm, but he stresses his friends' reactions one more time (lines 11-12). Nicola, with his facial expressions, shows a certain agreement with his friends who mark not only a difference based on linguistic features, but also based on the lack of commonality of recent experience.

Giulio and Nicola note the difficulty to accommodate their linguistic repertoire to the audience in the homeland. However, it is noteworthy that some informants maintained their efforts to avoid translingual practices as this would communicate too openly the difference between them and those who remained in Italy. In the following extract, Maria narrates the personal internal changes which took place after migration in relation to the separation she perceives from her family and, in particular, from her sisters.

**Segment 44. Confronting the family**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01 | Maria | no <..> allora mi sento:: secondo me | no <..> well I fee:::l in my opinion I |
| 02 | | ho maturato una consapevolezza | raised a different awareness I |
| 03 | | diversa cioè banalmente ogni tanto | mean simply sometimes when I |
| 04 | | quando mi confronto con le mie | talk with my sisters or even with |
| 05 | | sorelle o anche con la mia famiglia | my family I realise tha::t m:: the |
| 06 | | mi rendo conto che: m:: il fatto che | fact that they didn't do this expe- |
| 07 | | loro non abbiano fatto questa | rience makes them be in a way |
| 08 | | esperienza li fa essere in un modo | that is different from who I am |
| 09 | | che è diverso da come sono io anche | even people that in Italy they call |
| 10 | | le persone che si dicono aperte in | themselves ***open minded*** let's |
| 11 | | Italia ***open mind*** diciamo? in fondo | say? after all <..> I mean some- |
| 12 | | <..> cioè a volte è più una questione | times is more a matter of talking |
| 13 | | di dire di parole che non poi di fatti | of words rather than of facts while |
| 14 | | mentre il fatto che uno vive qui | the fact that one lives here in my |
| 15 | | secondo me anche:: cioè anche | opinion banally as you behave |
| 16 | | banalmente come ti comporti fa | makes you understand if you are a |
| 17 | | capire se sei una persona aperta a | person open minded to diversity |
| 18 | | una diversità mantenendo | even maintaining an identity of |
| 19 | | comunque una tua identità | your own |

Maria highlights her exemplar *other*, her sisters, whom she considers different since they did not undergo the same experiences as her. The reflection expands to include all those people in Italy who, while claiming to be open minded, cannot actually be said to have an authentic open mind, since their actions clash with this concept. In line 04, Maria uses the verb *confrontarsi* - 'to discuss a matter' - which implies an exchange of points of view. The speaker observes her change in this type of dialogue with her sisters and she acknowledges the factor in the distance between them and her, the migration (line 07-08). In lines 12-13, Maria connects languages and a set of values. She explains her perception of the illusory open-mindedness of the people in Italy, who utter empty words which are not full of the same value and meaning which Maria can provide since she lives in a truly multicultural context. Her reflection concludes with a claim on identity, although she uses the indefinite article "*una*" that opens up different identity possibilities (line 19). Maria does not claim her own Italian identity, or her migratory one, but she suggests the existence of a kind of work behind negotiating such identities in an environment characterised by diversity. Her sense of mutation is also implicitly phrased in the continuation of the interview.

**Segment 45. If I were Italian**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06<br>07<br>08<br>09<br>10<br>11<br>12<br>13<br>14<br>15 | Maria | sì un po' sì <.> allora a me è successo con <..> beh in generale a me non piace perchè se fossi italiana e uno mi parlasse così mi darebbe fastidio <..> dall'altro lato a volte è una cosa che non riesco a controllare cioè succede però mi ricordo che ad esempio una volta ero tornata e avevo detto tipo non so eh il mio vicino di ***desk*** cioè che è una cosa che è assolutamente normale nella mia mente ora mia sorella che proprio mi fa [mocking her sister's voice] ma cosa dici? smettila ***desk desk*** [laughing] | yes a little bit yes <.> then to me it happened with <..> well in general I don't like it because if I were Italian and someone talked to me in this way it would bother me <..> on the other hand it's something I can't control I mean it happens but I remember for instance once I went back and I said something like the person next to my ***desk*** I mean that is something absolutely normal in my mind now my sister goes like [mocking her sister's voice] what are you saying? stop it ***desk desk*** [laughing] |
| 16 | Giulia | [laughing] | [laughing] |
| 17<br>18<br>19<br>20<br>21<br>22<br>23 | Maria | e quindi ogni volta ora anche recentemente è venuto qua a trovarmi un mio amico E** siamo andati fuori a cena e io sopratutto perchè sono qua ho iniziato a fare un mix cioè ad usare un po' di inglese un po' di italiano e lui tipo | and so any time now also when recently a friend of mine E** came here to visit we went out for dinner and I especially because I'm here I started doing a mix I mean to use a bit of English a bit of Italian and he |

| 24<br>25<br>26<br>27 | | ha iniziato a prendermi in giro a mandare degli audio a mia sorella perchè sa che lei odia questa cosa [laughing] | started making fun of me and sending audios to my sister because he knows she hates this thing [laughing] |
|---|---|---|---|

Similarly to Nicola, Maria highlights some issues concerning her new style. When interviewed about her ability to modify her style once she goes back to Italy, she admits that she at least tries and she provides a reason reported here. The fact that she says "se fossi italiana" - "if I were Italian", produced with contrastive focus intonation (lines 03-04), is interesting because it implies a certain separation between the informant and the Italian population, which should include Maria as well. She implicitly states her more transnational identity in opposition to her national one. With this phrase, she marks the distance from her own nationality, implying her belonging to a different category. Canagarajah underscores this process by introducing the idea of "mixed ethnicities" (2012: 254) to explain the fluidity of contemporary migrants' identity. However, Maria does not merge different ethnicities, but she separates from the most natural for her, the Italian one. If we read this segment in relation to the previous one, we understand the identity negotiation process that Maria began after the migration. In her interview, Maria challenges the social identity destined for migrants, refusing to engage in translanguaging and openly suggesting criteria that assist her with such identity rejection. In the present extract, through the use of the subjunctive mood, *fossi*[37], she also doubts her pure Italianness, inevitably corrupted by her experience in a global and super-diverse city.[38] Such distancing from monolithic and imposed-from-above identities favours Maria justifying her linguistic choices. In the light of her marked separation from her sisters of a similar age who did not undergo the migratory experience, she assumes that monolingual Italians can misjudge her linguistic behaviour and, therefore, she initially claims that she attempts to avoid mixing when addressing monolingual Italians.[39] In lines 04-05, Maria mentions that monolingual Italians might be annoyed by such behaviour, once again basing her evaluation on Italian common knowledge regarding deviance from the standard norm. As other informants also highlight,

[37] This is the first person singular imperfect subjunctive of the verb 'to be'. In Italian, the subjunctive mood has an important semantic function, since it expresses the impossibility of assessing certainty (Serianni, 1991).
[38] See also Cacciatore and Pepe (2018) for a discussion on the feeling of loss of "pure" national identity.
[39] As already anticipated, "monolingual Italian" is an abstract concept, used in this thesis exclusively for simplicity. However, with this phrase I label all the speakers who, according to my participants, have a low knowledge of English or who speak English poorly. Obviously, I cannot know the linguistic repertoire of such speakers, and, therefore, I base my description on the informants' narratives. As these are introduced as terms of comparison in narratives concerning the absent use of translanguaging involving Italian and English, I assume that those 'others' are seen as monolinguals.

translanguaging is an index of a change that did not happen in those who remained and, therefore, such linguistic practice is still stigmatised according to the general Italian understanding of *mixing*.

Maria continues her narrative, though, confronting her hypothetical intentions and her actual behaviour (lines 06-07). The other becomes the antagonist, playing the role of the censor, of the linguistic judge who condemns Maria's spontaneous (lines 11-12) translingualism. A second other, another peer, is included in the narrative. However, the second part of the narrative presents a change in space. In the first turn, we are in Italy, where the other is a strong constraining influence. On the contrary, in Maria's second turn, the episode takes place in London (line 18 we see the deictic *qua*, 'here'), and, as Maria suggests, this freed the speaker who felt allowed to mix, despite the monolingualism of the friend who came to visit from Italy. The result of Maria's linguistic imposition is, in a certain way, a defeat, since Maria becomes the object of mocking and her friend allies with Maria's sister in ridiculing her translingual habits (lines 24-25).

Maria is a representative example of the negotiation of identity through the identification of an *other* that legislates with regards to migrants' linguistic norms and determines migrants' linguistic choices. This, in turn, drives a reflection on identity change and on the necessity of reconstruction of identities based on new parameters. Nevertheless, the censorious attitude promoted by this *other* determines the freedom of migrants' linguistic and social identity performances. Domenico, a competent bilingual, rejects his translingual inclination exclusively due to his confrontation with such an *other*.

**Segment 46. The Italians**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06 | Giulia | ok ma quando dici che non ti<br>piace questa cosa di usare<br>termini inglesi o inglesizzati <.><br>non ti sembra invece che la tua<br>lingua sia più efficace? o più<br>efficiente? nel senso che sei più:: | ok but when you say that you<br>don't like this you don't like using<br>English words or Englishised <.><br>don't you think instead that your<br>language is more effective? or effi-<br>cient? I mean you are mo::re |
| 07<br>08<br>09<br>10<br>11<br>12 | Domenico | ma no in realtà no perchè poi<br>quando parlo con gli italiani non<br>sempre lo capiscono e sembra<br>che tu fai un errore magari nella<br>costruzione della frase | but actually no because then<br>when I speak with Italians they<br>don't always understand and it<br>looks like you are making mis-<br>takes maybe in the structuring of<br>the sentence |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13<br>14<br>15<br>16<br>17<br>18 | Giulia | ti è mai capitato che ti prendessero in giro perchè tornato in Italia non so hai messo qualche parola in inglese e qualche amico te l'ha fatto notare? | has it ever happened that people made fun of you because when you went back to Italy I don't know you used some English words and some friends pointed it out? |
| 19<br>20<br>21 | Domenico | no però ti rendi conto da solo che ti guardano strano ma anche i miei genitori | no but you realise it by yourself that they look at you in a funny way even my parents |

Domenico is one of the few participants who negatively evaluated the translingual style of the post-2008 crisis wave. Nevertheless, it is interesting to understand the reasons for such an evaluation and the attempt Domenico makes to constrain himself linguistically. Earlier, in the interview, he admits to using translanguaging only when necessary, especially if he needs to engage in professional discussions. As showed in this chapter, participants are aware of their engagement with this practice, although they describe this practice simply as the insertion of English items in their repertoire. Awareness on translanguaging can be also proved by showing participants reluctancy to engage with it when they recon to be in a situation that - in their opinion - would not allow for the use of it. Domenico describes this practice as a deviation from the norm by adopting adjectives I requote to ask him more about his opinion (line 03). In challenging his view, I put forward a different attitude that I had encountered in discussions with other informants (for instance, in segment 16). Domenico refuses my perspective, introducing the rationale for his choice. In line 08, the censoring *other*, *gli italiani* - 'the Italians'- become judgmental addressees who are either not able to understand English, and thus refuse the communicative effect of this practice (lines 09), or who perceive the speaker's linguistic practices as incorrect (lines 10-11). Similar to Maria, Domenico's phrasing suggests the impossibility of accepting the same identity as the peers who have remained in Italy. By identifying 'the Italians' as diverse interlocutors compared to Italian migrants, Domenico determines his otherness from this category. The migrant is viewed as erroneous not by himself, but by the *other*, who externalises their judgment with facial expressions (line 20) that cause a feeling close to shame in the speaker. In the final line, Domenico shifts from one *other* to a different, albeit similar, one. The parents (line 21) are censors as well. Many studies on the new Italian mobility have highlighted the intergenerational conflict that, among other factors, set in motion the revitalisation of Italian migration (King *et al.*, 2016). In my dataset, such an issue does not emerge explicitly, since I did not explore in depth the general causes of the migratory phenomenon, but focused instead on speakers' narratives regarding their own migratory experiences.

Nevertheless, cutting the cord from parents and older relatives, and the claim for a certain distance from them, do appear in the reflections on the appropriateness of translanguaging. In subsection 5.4.2., we saw that the post-2008 crisis migrants, who require these figures as a kind of fuel to begin their identity work and then to perform negotiated identities, interpret family identity roles. Parents and older relatives, however, are also real and concrete people who are exploited in the othering process.

**Segment 47. Lunch *e* dinner**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01<br>02<br>03<br>04<br>05<br>06<br>07<br>08<br>09<br>10<br>11<br>12 | Giulio | cioè a me ogni tanto non vengono delle parole in italiano mi vengono in inglese a parlare con mia madre oggi <.> sta sta seguendo questa dieta e le ho fatto va beh ma quante volte mangi al giorno? fa: eh dipende e faccio va beh scusami colazione:: e::m e:::m e::m ***lunch*** e ***dinner***? e::m pranzo e cena cioè non mi veniva pranzo e cena eppure pranzo e cena facile | I mean sometimes I can't recall Italian words and they come to my mind in English I was talking with my mother today <.> she is is doing this diet and I asked her well how many times per day do you eat? she goes like: it eh it depends and I say well I'm sorry you have breakfa::st e::m e::m e::m ***lunch*** and ***dinner***? e::m lunch and dinner I couldn't recall lunch and dinner though lunch and dinner it's easy |
| 13<br>14 | Giulia | hai percepito che era:: non so come se fosse strano? | have you perceived that it wa::s I don't know as it was weird? |
| 15<br>16 | Giulio | con mia madre che non lo so qual è il livello di inglese di mia madre | with my mother whom I don't know her level of English |
| 17<br>18<br>19<br>20<br>21 | Giulia | ti sembrava che stessi non so imponendo il tuo stile? cioè poi ti sei ricoretto perchè hai pensato con mia mamma non uso queste parole di solito? | was it like you were imposing your style? I mean then you correct yourself because you thought with mum I don't use these words usually? |
| 22<br>23<br>24<br>25<br>26<br>27<br>28<br>29<br>30<br>31<br>32<br>33<br>34<br>35 | Giulio | no gliel'ho tradotto perchè non sapevo se mia madre sapesse che ***lunch*** e ***dinner*** fosse pranzo e cena però no <..> forse inconsciamente mi sforzo di parlare in questo modo però almeno a livello conscio so che mi serve perchè è un modo come un altro più o meno efficace di masticare quanto più inglese possibile anche quando l'inglese non lo puoi parlare <.> cioè con mia madre non posso parlare inglese | no I translated it because I didn't know if my mother knew that lunch and dinner is ***lunch*** and ***dinner*** but no <.> maybe unconsciously I make an effort to speak in this way but at least at a conscious level I know that I need it because it's a way as another more or less effective to learn as much English as possible even when you can't speak English <.> I mean with my mother I can't talk in English |

Giulio admits that, despite his basic knowledge of English and the recent start of his migration, he now sometimes cannot recall Italian words (lines 01-02). I base my analysis on the identity the speaker wants to perform. His translingual engagement is functional for the presentation of his migrant self. This identity is strengthened by the introduction in his narrative of a character, his mother. In line 06, Giulio abandons the actual space and time of the conversation to inhabit his own narrative character. The reported speech shows the self-correction with which he provided the translation for his addressee (lines 09-10). The justification for this gesture suggests the speaker's ability to decide in which contexts translanguaging is beneficial and appropriate in contrast to those situations in which avoidance is recommended based on Italian values. Once he highlights the *other*, Giulio feels the subsequent need to clarify the criterion for the othering process, and for defending his natural linguistic behaviour. In lines 23-25, Giulio maintains his superiority in his language competence, as he justifies his translation through his mother's inability to understand English. Giulio promotes his divergence, and the distance from his mother who is not able to comprehend the language spoken by her son. The intergeneration gap is expanded, linguistically, so that the speakers can claim eventual, final independence. Pushing further the interpretation of this narrative, the parents become figures who cannot fully access the children's language and, therefore, they initiate an inverted dependency relation. On the other hand, in lines 29-33, Giulio puts forward a justification for translanguaging which is not isolated in the dataset. Giulio recognises a pedagogical function of this practice, as it seems to him to be a way to improve his English. A similar narrative was present in segment 35, when Lucio claimed the uselessness of engaging in translanguaging with his mother, although she migrated too. Lucio recognised that his mother's inability to interpret translanguaging actually representated a potential learning opportunity for her that would have been advantageous. On the contrary, Giulio acknowledges such function of translanguaging. In lines 32-33, Giulio explains translingual practices as a means of being able to employ English in situations in which English should not be spoken. Once again, he evaluates linguistic norms based on common Italian attitudes and his own experience. Giulio's chance to speak, and thus learn, English is minimal due to his nationally selected social network and professional environment. Hence, for this type of migrant, translanguaging becomes a learning opportunity to be exploited as much as possible.[40] This kind of *other* does not only

[40] The beneficial effects of translanguaging practices in the classroom have been thoroughly studied in the last decade (García and Li Wei, 2015). However, there is no extended literature on the benefits for second language learners (Mwinda and Van der Walt, 2015), whereas, as my research suggests, this linguistic practice offers learners a practical possibility for language improvement.

emerge in the interviews, but also in natural conversation, as this conclusive extract shows. Cristina mentions in her interview the figure that represents, for her, this *other*.

**Segment 48. The grandmother**

| 01 | Cristina | no io no <.> assolutamente io | no I no <.> absolutely I always |
|---|---|---|---|
| 02 | | traduco sempre anzi l'altra volta | translate actually the other time I |
| 03 | | volevo dire vado in ***holiday*** cioè | wanted to say I go on ***holiday*** I |
| 04 | | per dire non è che a mia nonna | mean for example I can't tell my |
| 05 | | posso dire vado in ***holiday*** che | grandma I go on ***holiday*** what the |
| 06 | | cazzo capisce? quindi sì | hell does she understand? so abso- |
| 07 | | assolutamente mi adatto <.> poi | lutely I adapt <.> then it depends |
| 08 | | dipende magari ci sono degli | maybe there are some friends who |
| 09 | | amici che parlano inglese e mi | speak English so I relax but it's re- |
| 10 | | lascio andare però è difficile | ally hard |

Cristina explicitly mentions her grandmother as example of someone who cannot be involved in any translanguaging episode (line 04). For Cristina, this is due to her grandmother's inability to understand the language. However, as we saw throughout this chapter, Italian migrants do not always present the same level of language competence so as to assure mutual intelligibility. In conversations between post-crisis migrants, translanguaging is overtly encouraged, promoted, and exploited, regardless of the actual level of understanding of each speaker. Certainly, as I have noted, Italians in London group according to specific personal characteristics and, therefore, usually tend to form linguistically uniform groups. As it was for the peers who remained in Italy, the grandmother is excluded from this practice because she would not interpret the use of translanguaging properly. Language is not only a sequence of structural morpho-syntactic rules (Otheguy *et al*., 2015) but it also represents social norms, and it reflects human beings' behavioural rules and their cognitive approach. In line 07, Cristina admits her willingness to accommodate to the grandmother's norms, although this is perceived as a restriction (Giles and Powesland, 1997). She then uses the phrase *lasciarsi andare* ('I let myself go') which implies the sense of freedom experienced when the possibility for translanguaging reappears (lines 09-10). In the extract reported below, we note how migrants' rules are shared, and that the *other* is a concept shared and, together, made concrete.

**Segment 49. Half is better**

| 01 | Cristina | m:: la sorella di mio nonno ha la | m::: my grandfather's sister has the |
|---|---|---|---|
| 02 | | fantastica idea di andare da | fantastic idea to tell my grand- |
| 03 | | mia nonna il giorno di natale e | mother on Christmas day that she |
| 04 | | dirle che è diventata ***half*** | has become ***half*** Buddhist |
| 05 | | buddista | |

| 06<br>07 | Giulia | che non si capisce cosa possa essere | something we don't understand what it could be |
|---|---|---|---|
| 08 | Cristina | mia nonna su tutte le furie | my grandmother flew into a rage |
| 09<br>10 | Alessandra | ma gli ha detto ***half*** a tua nonna? | but did she say ***half*** to your grandmother? |
| 11 | Cristina | [laughing] no | [laughing] no |
| 12<br>13 | Giulia | è la traduzione per noi inglesi | it's the translation for us English people |
| 14<br>15 | Alessandra | [giggling] ***half*** buddista ***half*** cristiana | [giggling] ***half*** Buddhist ***half*** Christian |
| 16 | Cristina | mezza buddista | half Buddhist |
| 17 | Giulia | mezza buddista non suona? | half Buddhist doesn't work? |
| 18 | Cristina | ***half*** è più bello | ***half*** it's more beautiful |

Cristina introduces a narrative, and she reports a dialogue which involved her grandmother and her great aunt. Cristina, although reporting speech that was surely uttered in a regional variety of Italian, inserts an English borrowing, the adjective "half" (line 04). In lines 09-10, Alessandra highlights the lack of realism in this narrative due to the presence of the English borrowing. Implicitly, Alessandra is claiming the inappropriateness of using translanguaging with an older relative, Cristina's grandmother. My metalinguistic comment (line 12) aims to justify Cristina's linguistic choice, which she herself defends in the last turn (line 18). Once again, the English language is a tool to increase comical effect, and the subsequent turns support the separateness from the older generation of Italian speakers who the participants suggest would not be authorised in the performance or reception of translanguaging. This segment shows the speakers' awareness of the existence of translanguaging spaces (Li Wei, 2011) in which translanguaging practices can be nourished, and the linguistic resources at speakers' disposal can be truly exploited, as opposed to communicative situations in which this process cannot happen. The fact that the migration generated translanguaging spaces and that translanguaging is seen as a practice contrasting with the attitude of the older generations (Aresti, 2014; Rogato, 2008) is noteworthy in the Italian context. Moreover, excluding those who are seen as holders of the power and privilege strengthens the constituency of the migratory group and places these speakers far from their national reality.

### 5.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the major themes that emerged from the spontaneous conversations realised by the participants and subsequently explored in their interviews. Before starting the analyses of the segments in which matters of identity were raised, I needed to address issues relevant for my informants which shaped their understanding of *community* and *sense of belonging*. From section 5.2., we infer the importance of considering the individualistic character of this migratory flux in order to avoid misleading generalisations. Section 5.3. was thus dedicated to the analysis of identity performance through a sub-community lens. The following section (5.4.) offers a more detailed perspective, although I should acknowledge that each extract analysis was extremely context and situation dependent (Matthiessen and Halliday [1997] in Almurashi, 2016). The second part of the chapter (from section 5.5. onwards) covered the description of the sample linguistic repertoire, and the symbolic and indexical meanings that linguistic practices acquired after the migration. Finally, the last section, 5.6., relates these linguistic practices, changes in migrants' linguistic repertoires, and the participants' tendency to identify innovative - compared to those proposed in traditional migration studies - forms of *others*. Such identity-shaping practice is in contrast with the initial claim regarding the non-existence of an Italian community in London. Nevertheless, the analysis suggests that a linguistic migratory identity exists for the post-2008 crisis wave and it is provided by the possibility of modifying speakers' linguistic repertoires through the engagement in translanguaging. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, I do not dwell further on this here as the next chapter offers an overview of the entire thesis and a discussion of the implications of this research project.

# Chapter 6. Discussion and concluding remarks: the present and the future of the disavowed community

## 6. Introduction

In this final chapter, I provide a summary of the findings of my research and I reflect on further studies that the present investigation might generate. The aim of this chapter is to show the connection between the research questions and the analysis of the data presented in the previous chapter. Therefore, the structure of this chapter relies on section 4.1., where I posed the questions that this investigation sought to answer. By displaying the findings and conclusions reached (section 6.2., 6.3., 6.4., 6.5.), I also highlight the most relevant elements that contribute to developing the discussion and the study of late modern migrant communities. The chapter also includes a recap of the entire thesis, which I present in the following section.

## 6.1. Thesis summary

In preparing this study, I initially relied on the understanding of *migration* that Italy promoted. Nevertheless, I hope I have demonstrated the complexity of the post-2008 crisis migratory flow, by offering a more nuanced understanding of the contemporary migratory flow. By highlighting the social, cultural, and linguistic diversity present in the group, I sought to challenge the depiction suggested since Italian mass emigration has restarted. In addition, the thesis aimed at underscoring the role that individualistic views play in this new migration. Denying the affiliation to their national community, the migrants starts a process that leads to the challenge of the national character and to individually re-assessing on a daily basis the understanding of *Italianness* and the actual incarnation of it. Contemporary migrants seem less interested in promoting aggregation practices, but rather wish to promote their individuality and the possibility of playing with the identities provided by their Italian background but now filtered through the migratory experience undertaken in the most multicultural city in Europe.

Following the introduction in Chapter 1, in Chapter 2 I presented an overview of Italians' long migration history, particularly focusing on the UK context. It seemed impossible to offer a socio-cultural presentation of new Italian migrants in London without including the story of previous migrants. It is in the comparison with the post-Second World War wave that the interesting characteristics of the post-crisis wave emerge. I highlighted as Italian migration studies tend to provide a uniform description both of post-Second War and post-2008 crisis migrants. Nevertheless, in accepting both these depictions, I believe caution is necessary. For the

post-war communities I can only hypothesise that the acceptance of homogeneous presentations was the result of a tendency present in all traditional studies. Reality might have been different, and especially in London, the post-war community could have been charcaterised by a certain diversity which is rarely acknowledged. For the post-crisis wave, my study showed how difficult it is to believe that the post-crisis wave is an organic entity. I explored the complexity of this flow in the key section 2.5.

In Chapter 3, I explored the theoretical frameworks my research is situated within and those used to carry out my data analysis. The complexity of the new Italian migration required engagement with contemporary literature which addresses the variety of linguistic practices of late modern migrants. The translanguaging framework (reviewed in section 3.6.), which was one of the related frameworks adopted to support my analysis, proved effective at identifying the individual and performative character of the episodes extracted from the data and studied. Chapter 4 features the explanation of the methods used to find and select participants, the presentation of the project's participants highlighting the heterogeneity of the sample, the procedures and techniques used to gather the most spontaneous linguistic data (natural in-group conversations), the justification for the collection of a second type of data (interviews), and the methods used to process the dataset. In Chapter 5, I presented the analysis of the dataset, showing migrants' challenges to traditional community dynamics and feelings of belonging, and demonstrating the process of identity negotiation and display that the project's participants propose. The chapter concludes with the identification of figures that shape the participants' socio-linguistic identity. The thesis ends with Chapter 6, where I summarise my findings and the reflections this study provokes. I now move on to show the relation between the research questions, posited in section 4.1., and the projects' findings.

### 6.2. Who are the new Italian migrants?

The first question aimed at establishing the basis for the study of the linguistic repertoire of the new Italian migrants living in London. As demonstrated in the thesis, Italian post-crisis migrants can be addressed as *new* migrants since mass emigration from Italy is a phenomenon that started more than two centuries ago and re-started after 2008. Post-crisis migrants in London are new migrants in opposition to old migrants, who established Italian communities in the UK after the Second World War. My thesis focused on the post-crisis migrants, but it also highlighted differences and similarities between new and old migrants. I started my study investigating the traits that compose the socio-cultural linguistic profiles of the new Italian migrants. This part of the study proved to be crucial since the complexity of the new wave not

only represents an interesting element of novelty, but it also shows the fruitfulness of interdisciplinary approaches. The socio-cultural linguistic perspective adopted for this project proved to be useful to see the post-2008 crisis migration in a different light. With the restoration of migration, Italy rediscovered its diasporic soul. The great interest given to this migratory flow derives from the mismatch between the new nature of Italy, as an immigration receiving country, and the reality new Italian migrants denounce. Research has demonstrated politicians' intentions to present Italy as a country invaded by immigrants and refugees, although the statistics contradict such an alarming depiction (Colombo, 2018). On the other hand, Italian emigration has been reduced to a phenomenon of *brain drain*, not only to strengthen the difference between present Italian migrants and those of the past, but also to avoid any analogy between Italian emigrants and immigrants who reach Italian shores. With this study, I highlighted that, possibly, the brain drain narrative may have been considered valid when the flow started, roughly after 2008, although highly educated Italian youth began migrating, in fact, at the end of the 1990s (Becker *et al.*, 2004). However, since then this has become a mass phenomenon (Licata, 2016; 2017; 2018). This is the first finding of my project. It is impossible to provide an accurate description of the whole post-crisis wave since this is an unmapped flux. A symbol of this is the impossibility of counting the number of Italians living in London. In a recent article from one of the most important Italian newspapers (Franceschini, 2019), the journalist claims that, for any Italian registered to the list of Italians living abroad (AIRE), there is one more migrant who is not registered. Therefore, if officially around 250,000 Italians have moved their residence to the capital of the UK, the actual number of Italians in London may be double. As already mentioned, not only newspapers report this phenomenon, but also academic studies, as for instance Ricucci (2017). This issue is often mentioned, but the discussion rarely continues after this statement. By contrast, I believe it is important to investigate who are the migrants who do not register.

The post-crisis wave has often been presented as a flight of highly educated bilingual speakers who left Italy unsatisfied with the few prospects the country offered. Nonetheless, if scholars base their studies on the officially provided statistics and on the image put forward by the Italian media, they fail to see the unregistered half of the flux. Highly educated speakers, such as those included in my project, arrive in London usually after being hired by local companies. Thus, they immediately sign a legal work contract that testifies that they work in the UK, and they seem aware of the importance of registering with AIRE for economic and tax reasons. The vast majority of Italians who arrived largely after 2012 to escape Italy's tough

economic conditions caused by the 2008 financial crisis (Tintori and Romei, 2017) do not register with AIRE and, therefore, remain ghosts for the Italian Consulate and for Italian institutions. These individuals may constitute the majority of Italian migrants in London but would not be mentioned in any statistics.

I highlighted this situation in order to stress an important element that distinguishes my thesis from other studies on the new migration. Owing to my special status of insider researcher, I immediately recognised the impossibility of providing a totalised picture of this wave.[41] Owing to its high degree of heterogeneity, undeniable and only recently recognised by the media (Franceschini, 2019), I found generalising statements imprecise and, overall, inappropriate. As many other studies have concluded, this new flux is antithetic to the post-Second World War flow. However, the conclusion I reached through my investigation is that the antithesis is rooted not only in obvious socio-cultural and linguistic differences between the two generations, but also in the constituency of the waves and in the migrants' perception of themselves. The first part of Chapter 5 showed the participants' struggle with admitting their affiliation to a national migrant community. This seems due to the internal diversity of the wave which the participants often underscore. The criticisms the participants direct towards other Italians are in relation to the inhomogeneity of the Italian community in London. Such diversity can be understood on two levels. Firstly, different generations form what we would traditionally call 'the Italian community'. We can easily recognise two generations, if we only consider the mass migrations (post-war and post-crisis), but many more if we recognise that Italians have migrated to London constantly, even in the 1980s and 1990s (Sponza, 2005). On a second

[41] I mentioned several times that, due to my status as post-2008 Italian migrants living in London, I can be considered an insider researcher. I am a member of the wave I studied. Due to my involvement with the activities of the post-2008 crisis wave, I can affirm I observed the group for more than 6 years. My entire life in London has consisted in the observation of the behaviour of groups of Italian migrants in London that helped me reach certain conclusions, as the one here presented regarding the heterogeneity of the wave.
Contrary to other pieces of research that use ethnography of speaking as investigation method, I did not spend a limited period of time observing some speakers, but I constantly carried out my investigation continuously for four years even when I was not recording the participants. Due to my personal relation with the participants, I observed them regularly in many different occasions. My observation did not stop since my day-to day life implied my participation in the life of the post-2008 crisis wave. It was immediate for me to realise the existence of different socio-cultural linguistic profiles within the wave because I met hundreds of Italian migrants and spoke to them, although they were not officially included in this project.
Traditional fieldnotes could not be taken since I was a participant researcher, engaged in the activities I was recording. Since I actively participated while observing, comments on the recorded data were produced later and used for the analysis of the data. Recorded data were always transcribed and commented soon after the recordings had happened. I did not include fieldnotes in the thesis, but I included important comments and information on the participants and on the situations recorded in the analysis chapter.

level, the post-2008 crisis group presents many internal socio-cultural differences. As my sample showed, post-crisis migrants have different levels of education[42]; they are speakers of different dialects (as much as old migrants were); and they are diversely competent in English. Some migrants are fluent English speakers on arrival, while others need to learn the host country's language once they move to London, and this happens often, regardless of their level of education. The migrants come from all over the Italian peninsula. Some of them come from rural areas, while some originate from urban ones. They do not live in one specific neighbourhood since residence respects the division in social classes within the group. Italians work in many different sectors: many are hired in the hospitality sector, and a second large group works in the financial and business sector, but this is a too reductive division to describe the actual professional scenario of the post-crisis wave. The sample selected for this study, described in sub-section 4.3.1.4., is representative of such diversity and it shows it on a smaller scale.

My study suggests that post-crisis migrants do not always differ radically from past generations of migrants (see footnote 42), although they are surely a mirror of a different country. Points of commonality between the generations can be easily spotted as well. The *brain drain* narrative seems to distort the discourse on migration. We cannot deny that the post-2008 crisis migrants are economic migrants just as much as post-Second World War migrants were. Italian youth generally have a higher level of education than the average post-war migrants did. Nevertheless, the Italian education system does not always train in the skills, professional and linguistic, necessary to succeed in the British context, and, therefore, contemporary migrants are largely employed in menial jobs too. This finding is important because it shows a certain similarity between new and old migrants. Most importantly for my thesis, I can conclude that the depiction of the new migrants as competent bilinguals in English and Italian before migration (Vedovelli, 2015) is fallacious, since it only describes the elite migrants. My investigation suggests that many migrants do not belong to the group of the linguistic brain drain. Many new migrants prefer their own dialects, considering those as their real mother tongues. Certainly, all the new migrants use the Italian language, but competences in the national language may

[42] This is re-mentioned here once again because of the importance of this element. The common depiction of this wave is based on the characterisation of new Italian migrants as highly educated. My thesis showed that this is not entirely true since the wave is more heterogenous than scholars thought when research on this topic started. If we do not describe the post-2008 crisis wave as a brain drain and we acknowledge the existence of diverse socio-cultural linguistic profiles, we can actually see that there are elements of similarities with the post-Second World War wave and this is extremely innovative since so far scholars have never highlighted these similarities. Moreover, in this way we can start understanding the true linguistic needs of this group.

vary considerably according to the level of education, social class, and regional origin. Linguistic heterogeneity generates disparities within the wave and this factor exacerbates the internal subdivisions of the post-crisis wave. It is not surprising, therefore, that the project's participants exhibit a strong individualism. With this study, I sought to highlight the attention contemporary sociolinguists need to pay to intra-community diversity and its effect on migrants' linguistic practices. In the most recent decades, many scholars have paid increased attention to the role of linguistic studies in super-diverse contexts (among others, Creese and Blackledge, 2010a; De Fina, 2018; Simpson, 2017). My research moves on a step. It not only recognises the impact of London's super-diversity on the new Italian migrants, but also stresses the effects of intra-community super-diversity on the project's participants.

### 6.3. Linguistic practices of the new migrants

My research shows the potential of the linguistic approach to offer a clearer picture of heterogeneous late modern migrant communities, providing descriptions closer to reality. By giving space to speakers' opinions and beliefs, I gained new insights into the identity work of this group. As shown in the previous chapter, the new migrants challenge pre-imposed identities and group labels and negotiate the meanings and values attributed to their linguistic resources on the basis of their individual background and their experiences. Chapter 5 shows that this negotiation happens through engagement with multilingual practices. I discovered that participants believe they can only exploit the possibility of using all their linguistic resources with other migrants. For them, translanguaging becomes a new style that they only use within the wave and in London.

This study suggests the necessity to overcome frameworks based on deterministic assumptions (as those introduced in sub-section 3.6.1.) in order to avoid imposing researchers' metaphorical and indexical roles on languages in contact. The multilingual practices and the linguistic resources forming the repertoires of the participants may acquire different indexical meanings in each episode (as I showed in 5.3.1., 5.3.1.1., 5.4.3., 5.5., and 5.5.1. - see in particular segments 9, 21, 23, 28, 35 and 38). In the previous chapter, I both analysed representative extracts in which such differences were highlighted, and I also showed how patterns and beliefs may be shared on the basis of mutual understanding and commonality of experiences. In drawing my conclusions, I had to pay attention to a series of socio-cultural variables and features informing the conversational episodes in order to provide appropriate, explanations of partici-

pants' identity processes though these were always filtered by my interpretative lens. For reasons of brevity, I could not mention in the analyses all the elements that led towards the interpretation of informants' multilingual practices. As we can understand from the previous chapter, in order to conduct my analyses, I always took into consideration a series of factors, which I summarise here:

- The context of the data collection (for instance, the researcher's house, participants' houses, restaurants and bars);

- The communicative situation and the level of formality (with interviews perceived as more formal episodes than spontaneous social gatherings);

- Relations between speakers, and possible scenarios:

  - Some participants knowing each other very well
  - The researcher as a friend of one participant but not close to the other participants
  - Participants knowing each other very well, but belonging to different professional sub-groups
  - Participants with similar backgrounds and who knew each other before migrating

- Speakers' social network structures, considering:

  - Informants' intimate social networks and their composition
  - Informants' professional networks
  - Participants' involvement with recreational activities

- Participants' linguistic history, gathering information on:

  - Languages spoken in Italy
  - Languages spoken in London
  - The process of language learning (with a focus on when and how participants started learning English)
  - Gradual involvement with translanguaging

- Participants' personal history, focusing on:

  - Family background
  - Participants' educational background
  - Participants' origins (e.g. from rural areas or urban areas, from southern, northern or central regions)
  - Migratory history and time of arrival in the UK

- Professional history

- Participants' attitudes towards languages, dialects and mixing.

I state those variables here as these are related to the conclusions I reached regarding the high variability of the practices studied. These helped me to understand the variability of features affecting the episodes and the socio-cultural variables characterising the participants. In addition, the speakers involved in the project always use different varieties of the languages that I often categorised under named languages, e.g. English and Italian, for reasons of simplicity. It is important to remember that, owing to the complexity of the Italian linguistic scenario (Cerruti, 2013), each speaker uses a regional variety of Italian as a mother tongue and this implies the use of a large variety of phonetic realisations specific to each individual (diatopic variation). To clarify, speakers from northern regions pronounce many phonemes differently from speakers with southern origins. This is then reflected in the production of translingual elements. I show here an example which suggest the complexity of participants' linguistic repertoires. As shown in segments 36, 37, and 38, 'busy' is commonly understood as a trait of the translingual style of migrants. However, this item may be pronounced differently according to the origin of the speakers. The phonetics of Italian varieties, clearly divided into southern, central and northern varieties (Maiden and Parry, 2006), differ with respect to the realisation of the intervocalic fricative alveolar [s]. In northern regions, this phoneme is voiced, and is therefore realised as [z], while southern and central speakers realise it as voiceless [s]. As Bertinetto (2010) for instance maintains, the pronunciation of the intervocalic alveolar fricative contained in the noun *asino* ('donkey') is uttered as 'a[z]ino' in northern regions, and as 'a[s]ino' by southern speakers. The northern pronunciation is closest to the English one. Participants who come from the south of Italy sometimes opt for the maintenance of their original phonetics in realising the word *busy*, pronouncing it as /ˈbɪsi/, while on other occasions they adapt to English phonetics, pronouncing a voiced alveolar fricative. Establishing whether there is phonetic adaptation is one of the main aims of structural studies in order to discern the mixing phenomena realised by speakers. The contemporary Italian case suggests that when varieties of the named languages are involved in the contact this exercise could prove reductive, as it would not address the actual phonetic differences typical of each speaker. Moreover, this example shows how, in some cases, the labels given to languages are too broad to describe accurately speakers' linguistic practices and that only a deep investigation of each individual's linguistic repertoire can provide insights on the processes of identity negotiation and display that involve the exploitation of it.

By contrast, the translanguaging framework acknowledges the existence of varieties and challenges the notion of *named languages*. In addition, translanguaging is seen as a performative instantaneous act, and each of these acts may have a meaning for the speaker. If we consider the case of 'busy', southern participants may decide to opt for one pronounciation over the other for a metaphorical reason, showing affiliation and disaffiliation to their regional identity. However, migrants can choose the variety they learned living and speaking in London and, hence, include the non-integrated item in their translingual repertoire without noticing the difference in pronunciation. My research suggests that speakers instinctively acquire such a translingual mode. They acknowledge that it is the result of the mixing of languages at their disposal, although they refuse to pay attention to the shifts from one language to another. Only in situations where mixing seemed inappropriate (such as the interviews) did some speakers correct themselves or highlight their mixing by giggling, pausing and pointing their realisations out (see for instance segments 11 and 16). On any other occasion where the mixing was deemed permissible, the involvement of diverse languages and varieties went unnoticed and unfolded naturally. In the segments extracted from the interviews, we see how the formality of the occasion influences some speakers who refused to become involved in translanguaging. This mainly happened with those participants who judged translanguaging as a corruptive practice that degrades their Italian. On the contrary, those who did not see the interviews as formal moments, mainly due to friendship with the researcher, freely mixed languages. The fact that some participants considered translanguaging inappropriate in a more artificial and regulated context, while others did not see the context as an obstacle, signals the absence of shared norms and ideologies. Due to the absence of physical community spaces, the post-crisis migrants nourish linguistic practices and norms within their social network, attributing to these practices a more intimate usage. The disavowed community allows for translanguaging but actual engagement, and the functions and roles of languages involved are determined at an individual, or small sub-group, level. This, once again, supports the choice of avoiding frameworks with deterministic nuances.

### 6.4. The role of translanguaging in the negotiation of transnational identities

An important element that emerged from the analysis of data concerns the speakers' attitudes towards living their migratory experience individualistically. Even during the discussion on the changes to their linguistic repertoire and behaviour, participants gave the impression of being aware of the possibility of highlighting common patterns, although they often expressed concerns about generalisability (see, for instance, segment 35). Participants certainly

acknowledged their translanguaging instinct (Li Wei, 2018a) but also claimed the ability to curtail it in instances where they felt translanguaging was not the most natural and spontaneous choice. My study suggests that speakers are realisers of practices they hold precious and reserve for the most intimate situations, where linguistic norms have been tested and partially set due to reciprocal knowledge. I assert that translanguaging is a widespread phenomenon within the post-2008 crisis wave, although I need to be more cautious in answering the question regarding the indexical meaning of translanguaging and migrants' attitude towards it (see section 4.1. – question 3.a.). To be clear, I claim that the possibility of translanguaging is perceived as a trait of the migrants' style. All the other claims about the role of translanguaging and its indexical meanings reflect my interpretation of the episodes recorded, and then discussed in the interviews. As I explained several times, due to the interpretative methodology chosen for this study, all the conclusions I reached are the result of my interpretation and my perception of the practices investigated and this could be considered a limitation of the study. Nevertheless, I have collected two different types of data so that I could better support my interpretations. Moreover, my conclusions are based on the triangulation of data collected in natural environments and of data collected through interviews, where the participants discussed my and their opinions on the multilingual practices they engage with. As I explained in 4.3.1.5., I believe that my presence at the events recorded has not deeply influenced my data collection process due to my position and I would not therefore consider my belonging to the post-2008 crisis wave as a limitation but as a resource.

It is undeniable that the analysis of the most common themes which trigger translanguaging and their correlation with the transnational new identities the participants negotiate and perform reflects the researcher's interpretation of the data and the researcher's personal understanding of the social and linguistic experiences the speakers lived during the migration. Nonetheless, according to my understanding of *translanguaging theory*, this framework does not penalise the intrusion of the researcher in the comprehension of speakers' behaviour. Translanguaging is a performative act, a linguistic *mise en scène* for the speakers to display (in this case) new identities. As in a show, the audience receives the message the actors transmit, though this passes through the audience's cognitive filter (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, I can claim that only if the speakers/actors know their audience and believe they share a similar inclination to the interpretation of reality, translanguaging becomes a device to present their new professional selves, their adult selves or their migrant selves. Creating distance from such linguistic practices (by criticising and avoiding them) can be a tool to challenge the stereotype

of the migrant, or to refuse the transnationalism that the new life imposes. Since Italy has a long migratory history and this phenomenon is part of Italian popular culture, the new migrants know that they continue a social, cultural and - most importantly - linguistic tradition. As Blommaert and Backus (2013) explain, speakers' linguistic repertoires are the mirror of their experiences filtered by socio-cultural features. With the present study, I discovered that, for the participants in this project, translanguaging signals their new transnational life in contrast with the life of those who never left Italy.

In planning the project, I considered the techniques adopted by the participants to define the ontology of the post-crisis group in London and their connection with migrants' linguistic practices. The linguistic practices of the new migrants are metaphorically adopted not only to separate from the migrants of the past, but also from other figures. An intergenerational conflict emerges from the narratives of the new migrants and the new style becomes the means to stress the separation from parents, older relatives and the peers that remain in Italy. I thus concluded that, in their refusal to accept socio-culturally imposed roles, new migrants engage with linguistic innovation, experimenting and laying the foundations for a possibly new form of *Italiese* (Rubino, 2014b), a style which connoted past migrants, and which is now claimed by a new generation. Speakers' conscious reflections on translanguaging performance supports the idea that this practice, and the possibility of engaging in it, excludes a type of audience that, in terms of identity, shapes the ontology of the post-crisis wave (see 3.4. for literature on this and 5.6. for the application of the literature). I have just mentioned the main *others* who condition migrants' social and linguistic identities. In claiming that translanguaging defines the borders of the post-2008 crisis wave, I assign my participants the role of gatekeepers of the new Italian linguistic community in London. They decide who can enter the group through their negotiation and development of linguistic norms and rules that sanction the use of translanguaging with individuals who did not participate in the migratory experience. Those individuals seem to be excluded not due to their lack of knowledge of the languages involved in the mixing but because of the migrants' willingness to separate from those who did not migrate. Moreover, since the older generations are seen as power keepers, prohibiting their involvement in multilingual practice appears as an act of generational identity assertion.

One more aspect informing the nature of translingual performances can additionally support the abovementioned role of such practice. If we see cultures as processes of meaning making (Street, 1993) and language learning as a way of entering the culture by participating in

this dynamic mechanism, we understand the link between personal history and linguistic repertoire that migrants display. Especially in regards to peers, linguistic incompetence (or competence) does not appear to greatly influence participants' decisions to avoid translanguaging. The present study showed that translanguaging is the practice that communicates the learning and acquisition process, the struggle to grow and become mature in a new cultural and linguistic system. The learning process happens on two levels, in particular for those who start their migration with little or no competence in the host country's language. Those migrants learn English through the completion of everyday tasks and must communicate with non-Italian speakers when they want to feel more integrated, and when they seek to be included in the multiculturalism of London (e.g. having non-Italian speaking friends, participating in multicultural events, etc.). For the migrants who are competent bilinguals upon their arrival, as the participants themselves admitted, these occasions are contexts for improvement, and, therefore, a learning path is included in their migratory experience - even for them. Learning the English language, or improving in the use of its social functions, is the most important part of the migratory experience since it is interpreted as the way to access, be part of, and transform the London culture. I believe it is more precise to talk about *London culture* than about *British culture* only because the participants often declare their willingness to be involved in the city system of socio-cultural practices, discarding UK culture due to the great diversity they perceive to exist between the two systems. Participants, especially those less educated, see English as the key that will open doors for them in the world. Pessimistic views of British linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 2009) are confronted here with the concreteness of the opportunities the participants feel included in owing to their new linguistic competence. Undeniably, I can claim that the participants see the English language as an ally, not as an enemy, although it can hinder the integration and adaptation process. While in Italy the English language is seen as a scholastic subject or as a skill necessary to access some professional positions, in the migratory context it acquires a new value. Therefore, even the mixing of English and Italian can gain a different reputation. Participants suggest this shift by comparing their linguistic practices with those of their peers who remained in Italy.

In addressing the sub-question 'What are the processes of membership the participants rely on to categorise themselves? Are these connected with their multilingual practices and how are these linked?' (question 3.b.), I understood that learning English does not only play a key role in the process of access to the host country's culture but, in its contact with Italian or

dialect, English also becomes the tool to express involvement with a community culture. Despite the refusal to admit belonging to the Italian community, participants develop a group social identity through their openness to a style that is an index of the group's transnational nature. My research suggests that translanguaging is a means to show other post-2008 crisis migrants the process of acquiring new transnational identities. Other members of the group would share similar experiences and the development of the new identities can thus be negotiated and strengthened in a dialogical system. Informants admit the need to signal an identity change triggered by the migration, which, in a certain way, bonds all the members of the post-crisis wave. Participants negatively evaluated those who do not engage in the language learning evolution by considering this as a refusal to accept the change. Translanguaging is a learning technique (Garcìa and Li Wei, 2014) that, in the present case, serves the purpose of culture development and its subsequent transmission. The linguistic practice I have highlighted appears to be the most evident community bonding feature, in contrast with the absence of other socio-cultural community identity practices.

### 6.5. The linguistic community and its prelimary ideologies

Although my study suggests that translanguaging is a widespread practice within the post-crisis group, I also need to highlight that not every participant showed a positive attitude towards translanguaging. I observed a tendency concerning negative ideologies as regards language mixing. The naturalness of translanguaging was admitted more easily by those with a low level of education and by those who started their language learning process with migration. For these people, maturing and growing professionally in London coincided with the acquisition, or substantial improvement, of the English language. Therefore, translanguaging appears as the natural consequence of such a development. Language improvement harmoniously accompanies migrants' growth, while the possibility of engaging in translanguaging practices connects speakers who see the advantages of mixing and who recognise the indexical link between new linguistic practices and new social identities. This type of participant considers translanguaging as an effective style, since English is understood as a provider of clarity and effectiveness. Translanguaging becomes the only style that can offer an actual sense of the new world contemporary migrants live in. On a theoretical level, I believe the acceptance of translanguaging as natural linguistic behaviour signals informants' ability to overcome the notion of *separate bilingualism*, where, as Kleyn and García (2019) explain, the languages known by bilinguals were considered as separate entities which speakers should use distinctively to prove their competence.

The negative opinions some participants express show how traditional ideologies on language mixing are rooted in the linguistic culture of a people, and they are transmitted intergenerationally and outside of national borders. In deciding on and evaluating the appropriateness of their linguistic practices, those informants are mostly concerned about the opinions of hypothetical judgmental listeners. According to them, participants restrain themselves since they do not want to be mocked or they do not want to be considered uneducated. The prescriptivism in the Italian education system promotes and strengthens the belief that mixing languages (and in the Italian case this can refer to the mixing of Italian and dialects too) signifies a lack of education and an inability to speak correctly. Moreover, the linguistic behaviour of the previous generation of migrants has become so entrenched in Italian culture so as to offer a model to any Italian. Since those migrants were uneducated and dialectal speakers, this style has often been associated with the inability to master the standard languages. It is no coincidence that expressions of dislike for language mixing were mainly advanced by extremely highly-educated speakers - the most distant sociologically and culturally speaking from past migrants - who may feel that their level of education is not represented in translingual discourses. They admit the impossibility of controlling the translingual instinct, but they try to monitor their linguisic output when they speak with people who do not belong to the post-crisis wave in order to avoid negative reactions. Therefore, the *other* not only shapes the migrants' linguistic identity and repertoire but it also informs ideologies and bias regarding such linguistic behaviour. Such ideologies could influence the process of language transmission to a second generation, and the policies the post-2008 wave will make in order to preserve the language of the homeland.

### 6.6. Implications and future directions of the study

I start the final section with a reflection on the process of research, which leads to a consideration on my role within the research and the effects this project had on my academic self. Many times, I professed my post-positivist approach as a disclaimer for not providing universal truths that seem impossible to find in the late modern world. Nevertheless, it would be naïve to deny the role that previously acquired knowledge has in our learning process. Human beings approach knowledge on the basis of their pre-assumptions. Their understanding of the world is naturally shaped by their socio-cultural and political background. The present research highlights how difficult it is to abandon the instinct of relying on what might seem untouchable pillars of knowledge and at the same time how necessary this is to respect social actors involved in the process of research. I intentionally use the phrase *process of research*

since this shows my interpretation of the present work. The deep connection with my participants transformed this project in a constant process of changes, in which the parts involved reciprocally affected each other. This thesis presents the stories, more than anything else, of those migrants who are generally excluded from the mainstream debate on post-2008 migration. It does that through the analysis of their narratives, their conversations and their linguistic practices. The study was controlled by participants who had an active role in re-directing the research interests. The interview questions were constantly modified according to the themes suggested by the participants. The participants' opinions had an impact not only on my academic self and on my work, but also on my private self. For four years, I negotiated and reconstructed my identities as well, sometimes transforming this project in a self-reflection exercise. However, as I mentioned, there is a certain reciprocity in this process. My research forced the participants to reflect on aspects concerning their migratory experience they might had ignored or considered irrelevant. The discussions my study spurred surely influenced those who were observed. Their awareness changed and their attention to their identity construction processes increased. They continue the debate on their language and their language uses, even though my recorders are not on anymore. For obvious reasons, the thesis can only show a small part of this research process, but I believe it is important not to forget what such a study may imply for those who helped developing it.

I understand the process of research as fluid as the identities of the participants proved to be. The present research underscored the mobility of these identities, their being in contrast with each other, and though their coexistence. The thesis suggests the inappropriateness of taking for granted categorisations and identities that others attribute. A theoretical implication of this is that the values and roles of languages, within the boundaries of an ethnic or national community, should not be labelled without considering the personal history of each speaker. Common patterns can surely be found, and researchers are trained to look into this direction. Nevertheless, with this project, I highlight the need to overcome the tendency for Italian studies to address migrants' linguistic practices subdividing them in generations and attributing values and meanings which do not acknowledge the existence of diversity internal to each generation. My research reveals the power participants have in challenging these views. They have the power to shake old knowledge and produce new one. For the present case, for instance, participants underscore their active role in deciding the borders of the community they are supposed to belong to. Although the participants disavowed the Italian community, they also highlighted members and non-members and therefore I can argue that they were able to set boundaries of

such group. In addition, they claim their right to leave and enter the disavowed community, denying it or embracing it when convenient. Their challenge to the ethnic community suggests that in reflecting on the notion of *community*, and more specifically of *ethnic community*, we should first wonder whether this notion is valuable and relevant for late modern migrants. If being associated with an ethnic community seems not a need for contemporary migrants, we should ask which are the form of categorisation that are necessary to them. This reflection has also a practical implication. Policy makers and institutions governing migrant communities might benefit from this reflection, as they might need to shift their attention to a different type of associationism. If ethnicity is not a criterion to decide affiliation, it is important to investigate more what are the basis for grouping relevant to the new migrants in order to provide services which migrants themselves deem valuable. In this way, researchers become advocate for their participants while empowering them. By stressing the personal nature of the functions and roles of languages and translanguaging practices, the participants seem to suggest the impossibility to find an agreement on the uses of the new practices. They admit the existence of a community style, which allows for translanguaging. However, they are not always keen to engage with these practices since they do not consider such linguistic behaviour as appropriate for every circumstance. This research proposes a challenge to the coincidence between migrant community and speech community, while highlighting the emergence of a linguistic community, thus based on language ideologies which inform the group's linguistic norms (Avineri and Kroskrity, 2014; Friedman, 2009; Silverstein, 1998).

This project's participants demonstrate not only their urgency to renegotiate categories and social identities imposed by or inherited from the Italian socio-cultural and political history, but also their ability to identify the ideologies that restrain their linguistic practices. Some of them started to re-shape these ideologies with the migration, while some still bend to them. In both cases, this shows the power of language ideologies in regulating even a creative and instinctual phenomenon as translanguaging is. My study suggests that translanguaging is constrained to specific spaces decided by the migrants due to the indexical value that this practice has in the Italian context. Although they are addressed in a different way, the multilingual practices realised by past Italian migrants do not differ substantially from the realisations of new migrants. Nevertheless, past migrants are associated with the ideas of lack of education and poverty, images from which some of the contemporary migrants take the distance. Italian socio-cultural migratory history influences the linguistic freedom of contemporary migrants.

The participants of this project identified two censoring figures: their parents (or older relatives) and their peers who did not migrate. The intention to separate from those leads towards the engagement with translanguaging practices, but only the agreement with a migratory identity, even though transient, allows for freedom of expression. This study establishes the need for attention to the realisation of translanguaging as much as for the lack of realisation of it. The forces that restrain this linguistic practice may be crucial in the construction of a group's social identity. Especially in cases like the present one, where the group, the non-community, struggles in the identification of such identity.

For my participants the agreement with a migratory identity is not straightforward owing to the Italian cultural and political representation of migration. The participants showed their scepticism towards the image of the brain drain and not everyone accepted to be described under the definition of *lifestyle migrant* and all the implications deriving from this label. Lifestyle migrants are addressed as privileged migrants, who migrate to obtain better life conditions but not out of real necessity (Maddaloni and Moffa, 2018). While some participants accepted this characterisation and actually suggested it in order to contrast the association with the migratory status, some other negotiated their position as migrant, reflecting on the reasons that caused their migration. By telling stories about their first approach with the English language and with London, they reflected on their own migratory narrative displaying their closeness to old migrants. This negotiation process shows the problematic nature of labels, which create problems not only to researchers but also to the social actors involved in migration. I remind this because, in avoiding addressing Italian post-2008 crisis migration as an economic migration, we risk forgetting the linguistic needs of the members of the group. Labels need to be tested and contested. As my project demonstrates, individuals pursue this challenge in different ways. The participants showed the possibility of doing it through the exploitation of the resources which form their linguistic repertoire, but many other forms of negotiation could be explored.

On multiple occasions, I have highlighted the difficulties of working on an on-going migratory phenomenon, and thus with a group which has not completely settled. Its complex structure, its internal super-diversity (theoretically explained in 3.4.2. and 3.5., and discussed in 5.2.1., 5.2.2., and 5.2.3.), and its members' scepticism for the need to be part of a large national community are factors that characterise the group and that have an impact on the migrants' linguistic practices and the development of social identities. Moreover, due to the instability caused by political changes in the UK, predicting patterns for the future of the post-

2008 crisis group proves to be a difficult task. Since this research is intertwined with this migratory flow, it is impossible to discuss the future directions of this study without considering the possible evolution of this post-crisis group. We could wonder whether the group will reduce in number and therefore will develop community dynamics that substitute the ones developed by previous generations of migrants and which are now challenged. While I highlighted common linguistic patterns that are indeed individually negotiated and assessed, the stabilisation of the community could also lead to a regularisation of linguistic phenomena. In addition, the wave, that, at the moment, is mostly formed of first-generation migrants who arrived in London in their twenties and thirties after 2008, but mainly after 2012 (Tintori and Romei, 2017) and who may now give birth to a second generation of Italian migrants, as the post-Second World War wave did. It will be therefore important to monitor the structural changes the group will undergo in order to confront the process of native language transmission, which, for instance, failed to happen with the post-war migrants. Furthermore, it would be interesting to monitor whether the positive and negative attitudes towards translanguaging will be passed on to the second generation. Although it is possible that this group will only be transient, I would suggest that any future project related to the post-crisis wave should follow the socio-cultural and linguistic evolution of the group, with the scope to influence institutions and local associations regarding the needs of community members.

Another direction this project could take concerns one aspect I under-explored. I rarely commented on participants' use of dialects, and, since the research questions were not specifically oriented to ideologies on dialect use and language mixing, I did not gather enough information on the functions of dialects and the involvement that translanguaging may have in strengthening the internal divisions present in the post-crisis group. Internal super-diversity may be stressed by members on the basis of linguistic competence, not only in English but also in Italian. Migrants who prefer to use their own dialects (not only with speakers with whom they share regional origins, but also with others) may be addressed as poorly educated, and, therefore, excluded from some social networks and positions within the community. On the other hand, those migrants could become preservers of Italian linguistic variety and transmit it to their children, promoting a positive attitude towards non-standard varieties. Moreover, comparative research could show differences in the attitudes towards dialectal speakers within the entire community, confronting the linguistic experience of post-war migrants, as well as those of the post-2008 crisis. This study captures the new Italian migration in its unsteady present. The wave's fluidity, complexity, and its on-going transformation prompt us to consider this

project as a preliminary phase of research and to admit its limitations, although it will remain as a witness of migrants' initial approaches to the potential of the new resources of their linguistic repertoires.

**Appendix A: Consent form and Participation information sheet**

**CONSENT FORM**

**Title of the project: Multilingual practices in a disavowed community: The case of new Italian migrants in London**

**Lead researcher:** Giulia Pepe

I have been given the Participation Information Sheet and/or had its contents explained to me.

I have had an opportunity to ask any question and I am satisfied with the answers given.

I understand I have a right to withdraw from the research at any time and I do not have to provide a reason.

I understand that if I withdraw from the research any data included in the results will be removed if that is practicable (I understand that once anonymised data has been collated into other datasets it may not be possible to remove that data).

I wish to receive a copy of this Consent form.

I confirm I am willing to be a participant in the above research study.

I note the data collected may be retained in an archive and I am happy for my data to be reused as part of future research activities. I note my data will be fully anonymised (if applicable).

**Participant's Name:** ____________________________

**Signature:** ____________________________ **Date:** _______________

This consent form will be stored separately from any data you provide so that your responses remain anonymous.

______________________________________________________________________

I confirm I have provided a copy of the Participant Information Sheet approved by the Research Ethics Committee to the participant and fully explained its contents. I have given the participant an opportunity to ask questions, which have been answered.

**Researcher's Name:** ____________________________

**Signature:** ____________________________ **Date:** _______________

**PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET**

**Multilingual practices in a disavowed community: The case of new Italian migrants in London**

Researcher: Giulia Pepe

Supervisor: Dr Petros Karatsareas

You are being invited to take part in a research study which aims at understanding the characteristics of the language used by new Italian migrants living in London. As members of this community, you will be recorded in different situations. The recording times will always be agreed with the researcher. Recordings will never be made without participants' consent. The details of the purposes of this study will be explained later, after the end of the recording sessions. This approach has been chosen in order not to affect participants' conversations. Participants will be also asked to answer questions during interviewing sessions, which will be planned later during the research.

This research is being undertaken as part of the researcher's studies for her PhD programme at the University of Westminster.

**Please note:**

- Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
- You have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
- You have the right to ask for your data to be withdrawn as long as this is practical, and for personal information to be destroyed.
- You are not forced to answer questions if you do not wish to do so.
- Your responses will normally be made anonymous and will be kept confidential unless you provide explicit consent to do otherwise, for example, the use of your image from photographs and/or video recordings.
- No individuals should be identifiable from any collated data, written report of the research, or any publications arising from it.
- All computer data files will be encrypted and password protected. The researcher will keep files in a secure place and will comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.
- All hard copy documents, e.g. consent forms, completed questionnaires, etc. will be kept securely and in a locked cupboard, wherever possible on University premises. Documents may be scanned and stored electronically. This may be done to enable secure transmission of data to the university's secure computer systems. The researcher can be contacted during and after participation by email (giulia.pepe@my.westminster.ac.uk) or by telephone (07908967375).
- If you have a complaint about this research project you can contact the project supervisor, Dr Petros Karatsareas, by e-mail (P.Karatsareas@westminster.ac.uk).

**Appendix B: Interview questions**

a) Sociolinguistic questions:
How old are you?
What is your higher level of education?
What was your job before moving to London?
Do you know if you belonged to a specific social class in Italy?
What is your job now?
How long have you been living in London?
Are you planning to stay for a long time? Define 'long time'.
Did you move to London because of a friend's suggestion? Or a family member's?

b) Use of English and Italian:
Do you speak Italian at work/at university?
Do you speak Italian at home? Do you live with other Italians?
Do you speak Italian when you go out with friends?
What is your level of English? (proficient, quite good, sufficient, low). Justify your answer.
What was your level of English before moving to London?

c) Feelings about Italy:
Do you feel Italian?
Are you proud of being Italian?
Why did you leave Italy?
Would you like to go back to Italy?
How often do you go back to visit?
Which are your feelings towards Italy? Are you angry, sad, upset, totally indifferent, in love, never thought about it?

d) Community feelings/ Migratory status:
Have you ever thought about the 'Italian community in London'? Do you feel part of it?
Do you know about the historical Italian neighbourhood in London?
Have you ever attended any event organised by St Peter Church or the Circolo Scabrini?
Would you identify yourself as 'migrant'?
Can you think about practices or habits that make you feel as a migrant or as an Italian in London?
Are there places where you go to find people who are similar to you/ have a similar background? Are they Italians living in London?
Do you like to be addressed as 'migrant'/ as a 'cervello in fuga'?
Are you a member of any social network group of Italians living in London?
Do you use these groups?
Do you join any event or social activity suggested by these groups?
Do you read Italian newspapers written and edited by Italians living in London?
Have you ever asked for help or support to any institutional Italian organisation (such as, the consulate)?

Are you registered to AIRE?

e) Transnationalism/ the other: British people
Can you think about practices or habits that link you with the British culture?
Is there something new that you started to do after you moved here?
Do you feel you changed in your way of thinking?
Are you interested in the socio-cultural-political situation of the UK?
Do you see London as different from the rest of the UK?

f) Language attitudes/ English as a global language:
Do you feel you must learn English better to be integrated into the British culture?
Do you feel interested in doing that?
Does English put yourself in a globalised perspective? To be clear: Are you learning English so that you can live everywhere in the world or just because it is common knowledge that "if you want a job you need to know English"? Do you feel that knowing the English language truly empowers you?
What does English/speaking English mean to you?

g) Cultural knowledge/ the other: old migrants
Is there something in particular that comes to your mind if you think about previous generations of migrants?
Do you know if old migrants used to speak in a particular way?
Do you think you are acquiring the same style?

h) Group style/ Development of linguistic innovations:
Do you think you changed your way of talking since you moved here?
Do you know how? Can you highlight some elements of novelty?
Do you think that you use English insertions with a purpose?
Do you think that there are topics that elicit the use of English words?
Do you think you use English insertions more often when you are among Italians living in London?
Do you feel that you are using a group style?
Does this style make you feel part of a group?
Do you think there are situations where is not appropriate to use English insertions in speech in Italian (such as, with people you do not know, or you have just met, or in formal contexts)?
Do you feel as a different "you" when you are among Italians living in London?
Do you feel more understood?
Have you ever thought "why is this person not using English insertions?" while speaking to an Italian living in London who was avoiding English?

i) The other: peers in Italy and older relatives
Are you able to change your style when you go back to Italy or when you speak with people living in Italy?
Do you think that people living in Italy judge your new style?

Have you ever been ridiculed because of the use of English? Have you ever thought you used an English insertion inopportunely?

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