

Strategies of Inclusion and Exclusion in online and offline Interaction

ŁÓDŹ STUDIES IN LANGUAGE

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Strategies of Inclusion and Exclusion in online and offline Interaction



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Chapter 6 Migrants storytelling: An intercultural perspective

Abstract: Narratives are a valuable source when it comes to exclusion. Specifically, this chapter investigates the construction of migrants' identity through spontaneous narration of migration experiences and cultural clashes. During the conversation, multiple identities are constructed for themselves and the "characters" of their story.

Keywords: Narratives, storytelling, migrants, identity

Introduction

Every time we listen to a story, the analysis of discourse is crucial to understand the way in which speaker's subjectivity can be revealed. The category of discourse is assumed as essential to the construction of identity, and not merely a rhetorical frame (Fairclough, 1989). Therefore, any type of transition from a country/culture to another is always to be considered as a *discourse in progress* process, which involves an ongoing redefinition of the self in the relationship between the community of departure and the community of arrival, the land of origin and the chosen destination.

Migrants' experiences are often constructed through stories. The story temporarily embodies a state of mind or a condition, and creates an emotional involvement that drives the subject to reduce his/her control over discourse (Labov, 1972). Any first-person oral narrative, and its temporal sequence of events, allows us to grasp the appearance of a subjectivity that could hardly be detected through more traditional instruments of investigation, such as the questionnaire or the structured interview (see De Fina, 2003). In this sense, language forms may determine the positioning of the self interacting with the interlocutor, the other story "characters" and each one's respective culture (Harré & van Langenhove, 1998). According to Harré (2004):

Language is the prime instrument of thought social action. In following up the line of argument of the discussion so far, we must abandon a widely held presupposition of much psychological research, namely the stability and transpersonal intelligibility of

language. In so far as there are psychologically significant varieties of language, so there are other dimensions of multiplicity of selves (Harré, 2004).

The aim of this contribution is to investigate the identity construction of the subject through the narration of one's own experience *as a migrant*. Through narratives, we will try to highlight the discursive categories that signal the positioning of the self in relation to the cultural frame (Lakoff, 1987) of the so-called "migrant", and its network of assumptions and stereotypes. We will attempt to demonstrate that the analysis of some discourse features is crucial to see how the subject dynamically constructs multiple identities for himself/herself. We will see that successful integration goes beyond cultural boundaries and depends both on the possibilities to have access to the host culture and migrants' willingness to accept to meet and interact with the host culture.

2. Corpus

The qualitative analysis was possible thanks to 15 interviews, collected in 2014, with migrants living in Italy (Naples) for over 9 years and speaking Italian as a second language. As we can see in the Table 6.1 below, the number of interviewees – Senegal (3 interviewees), Ukraine (6 interviewees), Sri Lanka (6 interviewees) – reflects the presence of these communities in the city of Naples, where one out of four immigrants comes from Ukraine (23,2 %), and one out of six is from Sri Lanka (14,6 %), according to a 2019 report by the Italian Ministry of Employment.¹

Table 6.1. Biographical information about the informants

	Informant	Age	Country	Yrs. in Italy	Job
1	Yuri	36	Ukraine	9	Waiter
2	Olga	54	Ukraine	14	Caretaker
3	Stella	39	Ukraine	14	Caretaker
4	Lesia	40	Ukraine	14	Caretaker
5	Alina	36	Ukraine	13	Shop owner
6	Natalia	55	Ukraine	9	Colf
7	Susante	35	Sri Lanka	15	Colf
8	Suril	44	Sri Lanka	12	Colf

1 <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/documenti-e-norme/studi-estatiche/Documents/La%20presenza%20dei%20migranti%20nelle%20aree%20metropolitane,%20anno%202019/RAM-2019-Napoli.pdf>

Table 6.1. Continued

	Informant	Age	Country	Yrs. in Italy	Job
9	Susanda	46	Sri Lanka	9	Healthcare worker
10	Sanjeed	37	Sri Lanka	10	Colf
11	Marion	37	Sri Lanka	18	Housewife
12	Tani	23	Sri Lanka	18	Student
13	Amadu	42	Senegal	15	Accountant
14	Ammad	36	Senegal	11	Cultural mediator
15	Pierre	42	Senegal	15	Employee

The interviews, which lasted about one hour, were all planned to get uniform and comparable data, but, at the same time, leave room for the interviewee to speak freely, without being bound to a specific length of the reply. This increased the informal nature of the interview, and the empathy between interviewer and interviewee. The ongoing definition and redefinition of the self would not be discernible through statistical surveys or questionnaires.

3. Theory and methods

Within the vast literature on the theme of “narration and identity”, which has interested scholars and disciplines of different orientations – anthropology (Lévi Strauss, 1963), ethnography (Hymes, 1981), psychology (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992), just to name a few – we will use some methodological ideas from a fieldwork conducted by Anna de Fina (2003) with Mexican immigrants in the United States. The main objective, as in our case, is the detailed reading of migrants’ stories in order to elicit their attitude to the host culture:

To what extent do narrators emphasize their role as individual protagonists within story worlds? Do they stress the *personal* or the *social* meaning of story world actions in which they are involved? An analysis of these levels of representation of the self can throw light on implicit views on the role of *individual* versus the *collectivity* that can in turn be explained resorting to general cultural expectations and/or to the specific social circumstances that the immigrants live (De Fina, 2003, p. 51; italics added).

Although we deal, unlike the aforementioned work, with three different nationalities and cultures, we will check if and how the individual interviewee reacts to the projection onto himself/herself of the stereotypical “migrant” frame, which often means social and professional marginalization, ethnic-racial discrimination, low contractual power, exclusion from rights.

However, a difference between the present study and De Fina's concerns time: in that case, informants had recently passed the border between US and Mexico at the time of the interview, and only one migrant (out of 14) had obtained the documents required to regularise his stay in the US. In our case, instead, the permanence in Italy is longer than nine years and reaches up to 18 years for two informants from Sri Lanka (Marion and Tani). This allowed us to record the interviews in Italian, therefore in the language of the host country, and, above all, gave migrants the possibility to evaluate their experience of migration as a story and not simply as a chronicle (Labov & Waletzky, 1967/1997).

On this ground, three criteria seem to have a certain priority in the construction of the identities against the "migrant" frame:

- (a) *identity as a social orientation* through the choice and positioning of pronouns, paying particular attention to the variations between the narrator's self, the collective *we* referring to migrants' community and the category of THEM that designates the host culture;
- (b) *identity as lexical categorization*, focused on the lexical choices selected to define the host culture and, conversely, attributed to the self and other group of migrants;
- (c) *identity as narrative negotiation*, in which we try to detect first of all the attitude to narrate and the structuring of the story in terms of number and type of characters and its dialogic nature – the category of reported speech in De Fina (2003, p. 93).

4. Migrants from Senegal

The Senegalese informants interviewed residing in Naples are three: Pierre, Ammad and Amadu. Even though this is an extremely small sample, it is quite homogeneous in terms of age (36, 42) and level of education (university studies). Above all, it is useful to start outlining three different variations of the criteria set out above, that is (a) pronominal variations, (b) lexical categories and (c) narrative negotiation.

We observe that Pierre and Ammad tend to use frequently the pronoun *we* that hides the individual speakers in their own community, along with a generic *you* that neutralises the impact of a personal response

1 Ammad²

@EXP: e un giorno hai in mente di tornare in Senegal?

@SUJ: si si si

2 EXP stands for the interviewer, SUJ points to the interviewee. In this example and the following ones, italics are mine.

@EXP: come mai?

@SUJ: vabbè *noi* qua siamo venuti per cercare # oggi va bene non parlo solo come io per esempio parlo come in generale no # *noi* siamo venuti per lavorare e quando *lavori devi* avere come si chiama un piano di dire va bene io lavoro a questa età e devo mh come dire vado in pensione # *noi* siamo qua per lavorare e un giorno *dobbiamo* tornare questo # *io* così la penso

The interview with the third informant, Amud, on the other hand, shows a massive use of an agentive *I/me*, through which he constructs a space in which he is the architect of his own fortune:

2 Amud

@SUJ: perché *io* dico il percorso [/] il percorso l'ho fatto *io io* sono partito del Senegal per venire qua e sta a *me* # # [/] sta a *me* dare la possibilità di integrarsi non è che devo venire imporre la conduzione *io* deve essere in grado di trovare un punto comune sapendo che c'ho una visione esterna XX una richiesta esterna verso un paese verso gente che non sa perché a Napoli c'è gente che non sa nemmeno dove si trova Latina poi si cerca di [//] devi trovare un mezzo per dialogare con quello là non è che porti e imponi la tua cultura non esiste perché se *io* devo imporre la mia cultura *me ne torno* a casa.

@EXP: sei stato chiarissimo.

@SUJ: però crea la ricchezza. *Io* sono diventato qui ricco perché *io* oggi giorno sono capace di sciare tra le acque di essere [//] di cercare di non perdere le mie origini però di cercare anche di adeguarmi di conv [//] di creare una combinazione che mi permettesse di essere felice sia di qua che di là

In terms of lexical categories, Pierre, in particular, constructs the host as a way to *watch* the colour of his skin, emphasising his passive role and a value judgment about the other's propensity to accept the difference, those people with a different skin colour:

3 Pierre

@SUJ: dico si mi aspettavo di questo tutto questo tutto ciò [perché ch'è comunque sapevo come se avevo una diversità ovvio # comunque si mi aspettavo la reazione della gente però visto che io sono stato direttamente cioè in un paese non è perché ch'è perché Piana di Sorrento e Sant'Agata sono +... e là seguivano [=?] *con lo sguardo*

@EXP: ti sentivi osservato?

@SUJ: si si mh quasi scappavo nel senso che uscivo per necessità # se dovevo uscire dovevo fare un servizio perché non sopportavo *questo sguardo* di curiosità non è niente di mh però mi dava fastidio

- 4 Pierre
 @SUI: xperchéo fanno sentire perchè noi vediamo la differenza # guarda ultimamente sono stato in Finlandia # xx seconda volta sono stato anche a Parigi sono stato in altre città e in altri Paesi guardo lo *sguardo* di dire che ci fai qua quando entri in un ristorante quando entri in un bar # quando siamo ricevuti bene cioè tu avverti questa cosa quando poi già tu l'altro lato ha *un occhio discriminante* anche senza parlare te lo senti è molto diffuso

Along with his pronominal choices, Pierre comes to categorise his identity in relational terms, self-defining himself by difference and from the perspective of others, Italian and Neapolitan people, as a *straniero* (foreigner):

- 5 Pierre
 @EXP: non lo so tu ti senti alla pari di un cittadino italiano al momento?
 @SUI: io mi sento sempre *straniero*

Ammad, on the other hand, categorises his identity as a migrant in the more typical terms of national and geographic-cultural origin (Senegal, Africa):

- 6 Ammad
 @EXP: tu ti senti alla pari di un cittadino italiano?
 @SUI: no per esempio io avevo la fortuna di fare la cittadinanza l'herchéutata per dirti
 @EXP: perchè hai rifiutato?
 @SUI: io mi sento *senegalese* e morirò come *senegalese*

- 7 Ammad
 @SUI: perciò io la mia filosofia no io vivo in Europa
 @EXP: ma pensi africano
 @SUI: però dormo in *Africa* questa è la mia filosofia

In terms of narrative negotiation, the split between Pierre and Ammad on one side and Amud on the other is quite apparent, in line with their respective selection of pronouns and lexical categories. Pierre tells stories whose purpose is to build up a conflicting relationship with the host country. In the following example, the Italian host performs an action (in italics) that challenges Pierre's status as a traveller and transforms him into the "migrant" stereotype. The Italian character is represented as a policeman, through whom Pierre constructs the standard point of view of the average Italian who meets a young guy from Senegal:

- 8 Pierre
 @EXP: cosa ti ricordi del giorno in cui sei arrivato in Italia?

@SUJ: allora quando sono arrivato in Italia da Roma sono sceso # beh il paesaggio e ho incontrato un agente [=?] non capivo benissimo l'italiano diciamo quando parlavano veloce e il fatto # *questo qua mi fa "senegalese? E' atipico"* non capivo xx perchè ha detto atipico e lui ha detto "*di solito i senegalesi non [=?] vengono qua a studiare*" # allora già a primo impatto +... poi dopo quel stesso giorno da Roma mi sono venuti a prendere e dovevo andare fino a Sant'Agata # vabbè tutto bello ad un certo punto cioè a Sant'Agata quando vai c'è tutto mh c'è tutto il verde tutto un po' buio perchè il tragitto cioè non so se sei pratica di queste zone

The intercultural dialogue is fictitious, as it allows the informant to construct the other through his attitude towards migrants. Reported speech allows Pierre to sum up a dialogue with an impersonal and threatening interlocutor, who embodies the stereotyped social evaluation that Italians have about people from Senegal.

Amud, on the other hand, while resorting only once to a narrative that conforms to the minimum requirements of a story (temporal sequence, characters, sequence of events, protagonist's response, final solution), allows the host culture to emerge as an autonomous point of view, without using it to construct a judgment that follows stereotypes:

9 Amud

@SUJ: Claudia mi ha detto "guarda stanno cercando un ragioniere" perchè io aveva dei paletti sulla mia vita diceva "entro sei mesi se non trovo il lavoro mio me ne torno a casa" tutt'ora c'ho il mio lavoro la mia [//] il mio mestiere. Quindi io sono venuto e ho detto - avevo uno scarso italiano - "guarda se si tratta di contabilità lo so fare se cerchi un contabile ti posso dimostrare che lo so far" e lui diceva "a me non interessa il colore" perchè io sono rimasto con lui fin quando XX perchè mi ha dato fiducia mi ha dato ha detto "non mi interessa che sei immigrato a me interessa qualcuno che sappia portare avanti".

Amud's narrative, which includes individual voices of the Italian community, and not institutional roles or functions, can be said to be based on a true dialogue. The other is represented as an autonomous point of view and in a position that is symmetrical to narrator's.

5. Migrants from Ukraine

The group of Ukrainian informants is larger, but equally homogeneous in terms of education levels and age, although two informants are older than others (Olga is 54 and Natalia 55). From a professional point of view, the only significant difference concerns a single informant (Alina), who opened a grocery store with

her husband and lives in a condition of economic wealth which is not comparable to other informants. Another difference to notice is the almost total presence of female informants, with the exception of only one male informant, Yuri.

In this series of interviews, the opposite approaches, at least in terms of our criteria, are represented by Alina and Olga: the former offers a highly individual response to the experience of migration, with a self constructed as decisional and strong:

10 Alina

@SUJ: *Io sono una diciamo che mi piace tantissimo ascoltare e sentire consigli tutto quello che vuoi sempre consigli ascolto tantissimo la decisione la prendo Io consigli di tanti però la decisione è mia a un certo punto mi è mancato poter parlare con qualcuno ancora più saggio di me.*

Olga, on the contrary, offers a response to migration in terms of a confrontation between a nationalist and collective US – we Ukrainians – against an explicit THEM, the Italian citizens:

11 Olga

@SUJ: *Vorrei dire cosa i figli vengono per 10–20 minuti e poi se ne va non c'è pazienza però da noi vogliono togliere pelle Io già detto "volete togliere pelle? Purtroppo non si può". "che volete da noi?" ho detto noi facciamo troppo già anche molto e non dovete giudicare o dire "questo non è buoni o questi non è vero" noi siamo buoni perché noi venuti qua a lavorare non devo giudicare noi stranieri. Loro devo dire grazie a noi cos[//] cosa noi siamo come devo dire [//] siamo di gente come noi venuti qua dare mano aiuto*

For Alina, the pronoun *we* refers only in a few cases to the Ukrainian community, nor does it take on the sense of a 'national'–alignment – most occurrences refer to an extended self to her husband, with whom Alina shared the idea of setting up a business activity:

12 Alina

@SUJ: *[...] Abbiamo fatto un altro passo oltre cioè non sapevamo se va bene va male come va in che modo e avendoci tre bambini non potevo più giustamente andare a lavorare a ore perché era impossibile e io e mio marito <abbiamo fatto> [//] <abbiamo deciso> [//] abbiamo fatto questa decisione di proviamo facciamo quel negozio tanto documenti abbiamo il permesso di soggiorno ci permette di fare questi passi diciamo così.*

It is Yuri who uses “we” in a contrastive and almost nationalist key, to underline cultural differences between his own nation and Italy, and often construct a cultural superiority to which he seems to belong:

13 Yuri

@SUJ: perché arrivato a piazza Garibaldi riguardando tutto quel casino [//] era notte era l'una di notte e guardando tutti quelli sai neri cos' perché *da noi* non vedi spesso persone di colore poi albanesi *sporchiata* all'inizio io "ma che è? Dove sono finito!" [ridono!]

In terms of lexical categories through which migrants identify themselves, the definition of *straniero* ("foreigner") is the most recurrent, even if it is meant in a contrastive key that highlights the cultural gap between the two countries and cultures. For Stella, the condition of being a foreigner is an ineliminable one, which does not allow her to have a symmetrical relationship with an Italian citizen:

14 Stella

@SUJ: no non potresti mai diventare italiana sarai sempre *straniera* anche se ti trovi bene

Olga goes even further and provides the most nationalistic and confrontational group representation, as she is the only one to use and generalise the term *schiavo* ("slave"), in order to describe her relationship with the Italians and project Italians' approach to migrants as deeply racist:

15 Olga

@SUJ: "sì noi venuti per soldi non hai sentito?! Cosa siamo *schiave*!" tu non mi comprato giusto? [si rivolge all'intervistatrice] con mio carattere quando io non trovo con famiglia o con mia signora io devo sentire in casa come dentro di famiglia ma non cosa io devo sentire *schiava*, io *schiava* nemmeno là non sono stata anche noi siamo signore voglio dire non come pensano loro.

As for the others, identification occurs more frequently through nationality (the Italians) or work relationship ("the lady"), with the exception of Natalia who is the only one to have a very rich cultural life, and therefore represents the host according to the interactional contexts in which she is involved – the teacher of Italian language, and the poets and artists of the cultural centre that she regularly attends. Natalia is the only one to know and mention some names that represent Neapolitan culture (Totò, Eduardo de Filippo).

On the other side, Olga constructs a narrative negotiation that is rich with voices, but embedded in a monologuing context. This is instrumental to assert a point of view based on cultural and national conflict.

16 Olga

@SUJ: Da me è capitato mio lavoro lo sapete come ha detto una volta figlia? Dice "allora quest'anno io non ti do *tredicesima*" ho detto "perché?" "e perché

io senza lavoro crisi e tredicesima prendo io” io detto “*Veramente? e dove questo scritto?*” e ho detto “*cara mia prendi mio posto di lavoro stai vicino a sua mamma e prendi mie *stipendie* e tu dopo prendi tredicesima provi mio pane*” che cosa io detta. Ecco questa non mi piace cosa *loro* vuole XXX che questo *loro* non gli pagano questo mi è molto molto doloroso però io non lo so cosa questo lei non fare con me così però pensava può darsi una stupida che dire “*si si va bene*”, no non mi va bene.

This type of representation clarifies the meaning of narrative negotiation: it is not the mere presence of several and different voices that constructs a dialogic story, but the way in which these voices are exploited by the narrator: if these voices are instrumental to speaker’s ideology, as in this case, we have a sort of monologue dramatisation, in which the distance between the narrator and story he/she tells is extremely reduced.

6. Migrants from Sri Lanka

In the case of the Sri Lankan community, we deal with interviewees who generally have a low degree of social and cultural integration, but are not in a disadvantaged position from an economic point of view. The seven informants have different ages, since this group includes the youngest informants, aged 27 (Tani) and 23 (Nathan); moreover, the interviews also reveal the only case of an explicit internal conflict with the migrant community, as emerges from the interview with Susanda (44).

Tani and Nathan’s situation cannot be assimilated to that of other migrants, as they joined their families at the age of 4 and 11 respectively. Both Tani and Nathan say that they feel more integrated into the Italian culture and mentality, as demonstrated by their linguistic mastery and frequent references to conflicts with their “conservative” parents:

17 Tani

@EXP: e ora con tua madre comè il rapporto ora?

@SUJ: ora ora niente mi capisce ci capiamo ha capito che *io sono così come sono* [ride!] nel senso ehm # che non faccio niente di male nel comportarmi sì nel *sentirmi e vivere come un’italiana* non voglio dire vivere come un’italiana perché comunque sembra che [//] cioè *avere le stesse abitudini di una ragazza italiana*

Therefore, the pronominal distribution, in these cases, is of little relevance, even if Nathan adopts a national *we* when comparing the Italian and Sri Lankan school systems.

However, we do not find the expression of a sharp difference between US and THEM, as described by some migrants from Senegal (Pierre) or Ukraine (Yuri, Olga). Among the informants, it is Susante who refers to a collective *us* and introduces a personal stance, but just to outline a cultural distance from the host country, rather than a conflictual relationship:

18 Susante

@EXP: ma secondo te la crisi colpisce più gli italiani o più gli immigrati?

@SUJ: mh penso gli italiani più perché *noi* o almeno *io* *io* non è non ce l'ho crisi tengo però *io* non rimane sempre qui # perché *io* qualche dopo due anni tre anni cinque anni massimo *io* vado Paese # quindi *io* non interessa invece italiani sempre rimane qua in loro Paese questo e *loro* interessa molto cosa *io* non guardo questo # questo è vero perché è inutile *io* deve guardare mio Paese # quindi *io* non ci penso molto diciamo # non lo so perché mio tempo *io* lavorando guadagnare qualcosa *io* vado Paese # quindi *io* non guardo questo invece molto xx per italiani è il loro Paese le loro cose e *loro* guardano # diciamo per stranieri chi rimane qua non vuole partire Paesi vuole cittadinanza *loro* deve pensare questo *per me* no non c'è problema.

With the exception of the youngest informants, Tani and Nathan, the informants from Sri Lanka reveal a very high degree of agency in relation to the desire to come back to Sri Lanka (as shown by the “I” of the previous example), but a very low degree of agency in the relationships with Italian employers. Susanda is strongly critical of the Sri Lankan community precisely because of its excessive closure to contact with the Italian community and its isolation.

19 Susanda

@SUJ: no e ti dico proprio la verità sincera mi sono deluso troppo dai srilankesi

@EXP: hai avuto questo brutto impatto

@SUJ: brutto perché *io* ho vissuto anche a Napoli qualche mese con gli srilankesi mi hanno trattato proprio male *io* volevo andare a scuola *loro* mi hanno detto delle parolacce mi hanno detto “dormi che vai a fare!”

@EXP: è strano

@SUJ: ma forse geloso

@EXP: ma forse perché tu +...

@SUJ: forse perché *mia intenzione* di studiare di imparare e *loro* non hanno fatto questo quindi non volevano facevano gli altri srilankesi molto permalosi [...]

Susanda demonstrates a degree of agency (“I wanted to go to school”, “my intention to learn”) which is highly dynamic and does not conform to the customs of the community to which he belongs.

In the case of the Sri Lankan community, we can see that the recurrent nominal category does not concern the identification of the self (“foreigner”, “Tamil”, “Sri Lankan”), but a *function* of the self: “work”, which is one of the most recurrent words in the interviews. Italy, for these informants, seems to be instrumental in the search for work and a relative improvement of their economic conditions, a necessary condition before coming back to their own countries (the average time of stay of migrants from Sri Lanka in Campania is 9.2 years, see de Filippo & Strozza, 2014, p. 31).

20 Sanjeev

@EXP: cosa ti aspettavi venendo qua? Qual'era il tuo sogno?

@SUJ: diventare non molto ricco una vita normale # una bella casa una # per me *qualsiasi lavoro* io *lavoro* qualche cosa da fare solo io non pensavo molto diventare ricco non lo voglio voglio una vita però +... però comunque *io # può lavorare* ancora e credo di arrivare a quello che penso io

The story as a strategy of identity construction is naturally dialogic in reporting the voice of the Italian host, since migrants from Sri Lanka get exactly what they want from Italy, a job as remedy to poverty:

21 Sanjeev

@EXP: e qual è stata la tua impressione? [all'ingresso in Italia]

@SUJ: [...] qualche volta carabinieri pure controllato a me che hanno detto *“permesso di soggiorno?”* io detto *“io non c'è permesso di soggiorno senza permesso di soggiorno siamo poveri non voglio rientrare e così”* però hanno mi liberato non è detto niente detto *“non ti preoccupare però cerca di non girare per la strada uscire senza permesso”* così perché io è spiegato la mia situazione così non voglio tornare # quello importante no? se vai in Germania loro mandano via subito! Guarda come fatto carabinieri che ha detto *“vai a casa non girare la notte”* perché io stava andando da mio fratello sorella a trovare una Domenica

For the Sri Lankan community, however, a dynamic narrative negotiation has a different meaning from what we have noticed in some cases of the Senegalese (Amadu) or Ukrainian (Alina, Natalia) communities. If the dialogue indicates an open minded attitude towards the host culture for the migrants from Senegal and Ukraine, the dialogue here becomes just a neutral discursive element, which reflects the community's self-isolation within the city territory.

7. Conclusion

By analysing migrants' stories, several and different representations and constructions of the self and the *others* have emerged. The analysis, guided by the

criteria of pronoun positioning, lexical categorisation and narrative negotiation has allowed us to observe if and how the single interviewed subject produces a social response to the stereotypical “migrant” frame or is able to provide an individual and personal response to intercultural challenges (De Fina, 2003, p. 51).

The group of Senegalese informants shows in Pierre and Amadu the two sides of identity construction, with Pierre’s conflictual position in opposition to Amadu’s orientation towards cultural integration. In the case of the migrants from Ukraine, this imaginary line between socio-cultural conflict on the one hand and individual integration on the other is radicalised. In Yuri’s and Olga’s stories, the cultural clash between the country of origin and the host country is frequently mentioned. However, the cases of Alina and Natalia show how the individual response and a high degree of constructive agency can pave the way to a successful integration process.

In the case of migrants from Sri Lanka who are who are fully integrated into their community (Marion, Susante and Sanjeev), the focus on work and the need to improve their economic conditions overshadows any abstract representation of intercultural interaction.

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