

Language in the Process of Identity (Re)Construction. Non-European Bilingual Migrants as a Case Study

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This research project examines the role of language in the process of individual identity formation by using bilingualism and multilingualism as case studies for the analyses. Using empirical data collected through interviews with non-European migrants, as well as academic papers, this dissertation focuses on the consequences of acquiring a second language in adulthood. First, this work focuses on bilingualism as a means of studying the process of dislocation and de-centering (Hall, 1995:7) that takes place when a person 'becomes' bilingual. Secondly, bilingualism is examined as an example of double identity. In particular, this dissertation explores whether it is possible for the bilingual individual to experience schizophrenic sensations between one language and the other. To conclude, this project looks at the role of language in the development of an individual's national (Italian) and supranational (European) identities. In particular, it aims to understand whether or not a non-European migrant develops a sense of belonging to the country of arrival and what role language plays in this process. Finally, the study investigates the impact of this process on the creation of European identity.