

*IL DIALETTO DI CAMPOBASSO È SU PER GIÙ COME IL NAPOLETANO:*  
NEAPOLITAN AS A LINGUISTIC IDENTITY MARKER IN TRANSNATIONAL  
MIGRATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the concept of *extra-linguistic reference variety* that has been investigated through an analysis of the role of the Neapolitan dialect which has been used as a symbol of identity by migrants of non-Neapolitan heritage. This case study is based upon studies on Italian immigration in three English cities. The paper focuses on how Southern Italian migrants (re)construct their linguistic identities, starting from a comparison with the Neapolitan dialect and the Neapolitan culture. This qualitative case study shows that even for non-Neapolitan migrants, Neapolitan is not merely a prestige variety, but also has a symbolic value that evokes an ideo-logical orientation towards it among speakers of other language varieties, thereby becoming a point of reference for new (socio)cultural identities and sub-communi-ties within the Italian communities studied.