

‘Quella era veramente è Little Italy, la nostra Little Italy’: Multiple centres, cultural presence and the articulation of spaces of speech from Tasmania

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the intersections between migrant experiences, multi-lingual practices, and the creation of space. It does so by focusing on Italians who migrated to Tasmania, a group that has long been isolated from the rest of the Italian diaspora. Using an ethnographic approach within a constructivist framework, this research shows that when experiences of movement are recounted in interaction they bring about spaces of speech that are possible thanks to the articulation of local and transnational ‘centres’, which in turn are intertwined with a rich set of linguistic resources. These resources include code-choice, codeswitching, and intentional exposure of phonological variation, and are variously combined to allow the emergence of spaces for people to move through. Spaces of speech are thus situated interactional spaces where acts of (re)telling are related to centres as spatial resources through which not only social meaning is created but also location and locution are mutually constitutive. (Spaces of speech, centres, cultural presence, Italian, Tasmania)*

INTRODUCTION

The telling of migrant experiences is in itself a prolific endeavour, when individuals create a sense of old and new ways of living, explaining to others facts that help them to make sense of their past and their present. Crucially, when doing so, the migrants’ linguistic resources can allow them to produce, together with an interlocutor, something that goes beyond the act of telling. They create a new space, which is intrinsically interactional, that is, created for and through language exchanges (Li Wei 2011:1223). Precisely this space, here not intended as a simple container for human action but as actively produced through interaction, is the focus of the present study. I investigate the ways in which Italians who have settled in Tasmania make apparent the creation of space through language and in relation to their dwelling sites. I concentrate on the intersections between space and speech as ‘spaces of speech’ (Livingstone 2007) whereby a subject takes position in the world of her/his meaning, which is in turn both situated and emergent from the speaker’s consciousness (Merleau-Ponty 1945). The research starts from the assumption that the

migrants' constructed 'centres'—pivotal geographical points that serve as discursive channels—are spatial resources (Kelly-Holmes 2013) and are appropriated as such in interaction. The main goal is to enquire into the formation of space through the centres that Italians in Tasmania have experienced and decide to use, choosing from the set of resources they have at their disposal.

(DE)CENTRALISING ITALIAN SPEAKERS

Italian migration has been often noticed thanks to the presence of Italian clusters in big cities across the world such as Buenos Aires, New York, and Toronto, where groups have created ethnicised zones, among which the Little Italies are the most easily recognisable. Italian migration, however, has also reached remote areas that are less visible and have largely been excluded from the collective narratives of Italianness abroad, as well as from academic research. A case in point is Tasmania, where Italians have been settled for over 150 years and still fail to be included in the discourses produced by large Italo-Australian associations based in continental Australian cities. Although much is known about the history of Italians in Australia, Italians in Tasmania are effectively invisible. They do not appear in any major scholarly work on migrant communities in Australia, nor can they be found in accounts that focus specifically on Italo-Australians. The data discussed in this article was collected through ethnographic work that started with a trip to Tasmania in July–August 2014 and continued with follow-ups in the following months. During the trip, it was possible to gather some data on the migrants' past and to trace some of the self-produced historiography that various members of the community have shared.

Much research is needed to understand the history of Italians in Tasmania, which is beyond the scope of this article, but a few tentative points can be made based on initial observations: (i) Italians started to arrive in the 1800s, at first mainly musicians and entrepreneurs, and kept arriving until they reached a peak after WWII; (ii) many Italians worked on hydroelectric dam projects, in the concrete industry, and in a single large silk and textile factory; (iii) two leading symbolic figures can be found among Italians in Tasmania: Diego Bernacchi (1853–1925), businessman and father of the explorer Louis Bernacchi, the first Australian to set foot in Antarctica; and Claudio Alcorso (1913–2000), industrialist, pioneer winemaker, humanitarian, and founder of the Italian club in Hobart (see Ottavi 2005; Rimón 2005).

TOWARD SPACES OF SPEECH

In this article I focus on how these migrants create space in interaction when they articulate their 'experience of movement' (Papastergiadis 2000:147; Escobar 2001:35). The notion of space has been long debated among scholars and its distinction from place has not always been agreed upon. The works of Tuan (1977) and Relph (1976) have been particularly influential in making a distinction

between the two concepts, finding the notion of place more productive. They intended place as a location created by human experiences, while they thought of space as the part of the Earth's surface that exists regardless of human action. In this sense space was considered a less significant concept in that, unlike place, it was not explicitly invested with social meaning. Other theorizations, however, have progressively problematized this view by exploring space through the lens of social processes (Cresswell 2004:8–10) and suggesting a more nuanced distinction between place and space. Harvey (1973, 1989, 2006) has shown that spaces are also both constructed and lived, in the sense that they exist because individuals have experienced them and contributed to their construction. Many other scholars have also rejected rigid dichotomies between place and space (cf. Hubbard, Bartley, Fuller, & Kitchin 2002). In fact, the problematic nature of the distinction between the two concepts became apparent most notably through the research of Lefebvre (1991), who argues that space is social in its very essence as it is formed by the action of human beings. Individuals represent space with plans, maps, and design and at the same time move through space in their daily activities such as buying, playing, and travelling, thus being actively involved in its formation. Moreover, space is made possible by attribution of meaning that is intertwined with relational practices (cf. also Massey 2005); individuals meet, stay together, and speak with other individuals within and through space. For Lefebvre, indeed, human action—as localised practice—is key to the construction of space. Space¹ is therefore both socially constructed and made possible through the relationship between individuals and their surroundings (Pickles 1985; Strohmayer 1998). It is inhabited and meaningful because of the presence of living beings, and is one of the primordial expressions of our being-in-the-world (Merleau-Ponty 1945).

Working on the nexus of space and language, in their volume on German speakers in Canada, Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain (2013:15) introduce the concept of sociolinguistic space, which they define as a 'space for people to dwell in created through interaction'. Their study explores how spaces are created through the use of immigrant languages and positioning practices. Migrants, in their retellings, foreground instances where spaces were born while it is simultaneously the act of telling itself that brings about space in the interaction with the interviewer. It is what happens, for instance, when their informants are asked about using German far from Europe (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain:124–26). They may mention *schuhplattler* dancing in Edmonton to evoke the space created among Germans, explaining how various activities made sense for them at the time when they were performed. Crucially, however, the telling—the ways in which choices are narrated and constructed—generates meaning in the here and now of the interaction. In their analysis Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain show that migrants position themselves inside, outside, at the edges of, or in the middle of spaces. They attribute meaning and concurrently create it using what Gee (2005) calls 'signs' and 'portals', that is, respectively 'what the social space is about' and what people 'use to enter the space' (cf. Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain 2013:19).²

Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain also provide an overview of how the concept of space has been used to study language in society. They describe the approach adopted by Li Wei’s (2011) study of multilingual behaviour in his treatment of translanguaging. Chinese migrants in the UK create moments of particular semiotic relevance where researchers can see a ‘lived space, created through everyday, multiple social practices, including multilingual practices’ (Li Wei 2011:1223). They also mention the research of Byrd Clark (2009), Kramsch (2009), Blommaert (2005), and Mendoza-Denton & Osborne (2010) to highlight possible links with research on migration and multilingualism, such as the importance of ‘the attributive qualities of space’ (Blommaert 2005:223) for the use of linguistic varieties associated with space itself. Likewise, space is pivotal in narratives of migration as outlined by Baynham (2003), as well as a number of other researchers, most notably Stevenson & Carl (2010) and Lefkowitz (2004), who have described a number of possible links between space and identity construction. For instance, space was found to be constitutive of narrative action in the sense that narratives themselves can be thought of as spaces where action occurs.

More recent research has further elaborated on some of these insights, delving into the intersections between identity, language, and space. Li Wei & Zhu Hua (2013:532) show the relevance to Chinese students in the UK of a ‘newly created social space’ where researchers can trace and analyse identity constructions that occur concomitantly with language practices. This is a ‘trans-space where new language practices, meaning-making multimodal practices, subjectivities and social structures are dynamically generated’ (García & Li Wei 2014:43). In the creation of this space, Chinese students can express their creativity, their multiple affiliations, and their transnational identities. Similarly, fourth-grade pupils of a Spanish–English bilingual class in the US can use the space to work, learn, and play together across languages (García 2011). In this space, one can appreciate the dynamic nature of multilingual practices of various kinds and the capacity of the speakers to ‘mobilize their linguistic resources’ (Li Wei & Zhu Hua 2013:519).

In parallel, other scholars have paid more specific attention to the situated nature of spatial work beyond its role in identity construction. Pennycook (2010), for instance, has stressed the importance of considering the local sites where language is used in relation to specific activities and objects. Individuals interact by zigzagging and rummaging among their language resources, always relating to the ‘situational specificity’ (Wise 2009:35) they happen to be in. In this sense, space is the material site where language practices come about, as well as being constructed ‘through such practices’ (Pennycook & Otsuji 2014:179). In a restaurant in Tokyo the trajectories of the movements of people during a busy working day are at the base of a complex but fluid enactment of language where the socially construed boundaries between Japanese, English, and French allow room for new hybrid language practices.

Along these lines of enquiry, in this study I employ the notion of spaces of speech. This concept was first introduced by Livingstone (2007) to bridge the

spatial and social dimensions for the creation and circulation of meaning, but finds theoretical underpinning in phenomenological thought. In particular, Merleau-Ponty (1945:225) viewed speech as a *prise de position* of the speaking subject in the world of her/his meaning, where such a world is in fact a linguistic space in itself that the subject can modulate through linguistic tools (Merleau-Ponty 1964:241). In this perspective, space is intended as a lived entity that is constituted by the experiences of the subject with her/his surroundings and her/his meaning-making as a conscious subject. In this sense, space can be considered linguistic at its core, in that it is made possible by the continuity between the subject in motion and linguistic tools that enable the *prise de position*. While Merleau-Ponty explains only that these linguistic tools are a system of elements that cooperate for expression (Merleau-Ponty 1960:85) and fails to describe them in great detail, his description of linguistic space indicates that these elements are undoubtedly connected to the situated nature of speech. At the same time he underscores that speech in space is something that inevitably ‘brings to the surface all the deep-rooted relations of the lived experiences where it takes shape’ (Merleau-Ponty 1964:166). Speech is both acted in a situational realm and emerges from the speaker’s consciousness.

Here I specifically enquire into the tools suggested by Merleau-Ponty by exploring spaces of speech—interactional spaces where the speaking subject indeed TAKES POSITION in phenomenological terms. It will become clear that the key actor of this study does so by mobilising centres as spatial resources in interaction, through which not only is social meaning created, but also ‘location and locution’ (Livingstone 2007:75) shape each other.

The focus of this study is precisely on the intersection between spaces of speech and the experience of movement along the edges of Italian migration, far from large urban settings, where one can find areas that are sidelined in most cartographies of diasporas. Kelly-Holmes & Pietikäinen (2013:222) describe these sites as characterised by geographic, economic, and historical peripherality, where the presence of some notional centres functions as a reference point for the creation of meaning elsewhere. In their volume they illustrate the ways in which tensions between centre and periphery are reconfigured by contemporary multilingual practices. By paying special attention to ‘crucial sites’ (Philips 2000) such as airports, indigenous heritage sites, and commercial and tourist spaces, which are found to be indicative of the complex interactions between individual practices and systemic norms, they highlight the fluid nature of centre/periphery relationships. These centres are not fixed concepts but rather the result of processes of peripheralisation and centralisation, along which we can trace shifting and ambiguous positions (Ang & Stratton 1996) where the discursive power of some specific centres is not static. Kelly-Holmes & Pietikäinen argue for a concept of centre—and distance from it—as socially constructed also in the sense of being something that individuals and groups can do, thus acknowledging its performative potential (cf. also Giddens 1984). Following this direction, this study examines how various centres emerge in an

interactional setting, where they are constructed and ‘positioned against one another’ (Dong & Blommaert 2009:45). These centres are ‘brought in’ (Bauman 1986) but also created as centres in the making of space in interaction (de Certeau 1984). How do Italians create such space in Tasmania? How do different centres relate to the network of resources that are relevant to these migrants? How are centres deployed in the contingent act of (re)creating space?

CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR SPACE TO EMERGE

The key actor (Fetterman 2010:40–55) on whom this study focuses is a person who has long been involved with the activities of the Australian Italian Association of Tasmania and the adjacent Italian club, located in a northern suburb of Hobart. Giovanni³ is from a small town in the province of Treviso in northeastern Italy. He did not complete secondary school, but he studied some Latin and rudiments of Roman and ancient Greek literature as well as history. He migrated to Tasmania in the 1960s and was almost immediately immersed in social and cultural activities, which he continued to be part of until his retirement. He speaks English, Italian, and Venetian. Giovanni was interviewed mostly in his home during meals to which the researcher was invited. The researcher is an academic based in the UK but is originally from a large city in the Veneto region of Italy. He has lived for several years in Sydney and has numerous connections with Italians in Australia across different generations. He also speaks Italian, English, and Venetian, and used all of them during the interviews. When the interviewer approached Giovanni, he endeavoured to create an open, reciprocal, and dialogic process, where the formation of space emerged thanks to the interaction between him and the key actor (Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain 2013:31–35). Using an ethnographic approach, this research also aligns with Mondada (1998) in underscoring the oscillations in visibility of the interviewer inherent in any linguistic interview, in keeping with a constructivist approach (Bucholtz & Hall 2005), which exposes and even nurtures the active contribution of the researcher in the formation of accounts. With this in mind, questions were posed in order to elicit lengthy answers (Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain 2013:8–12) revolving around the actor’s migrant experiences as ‘triggers for cultural self-reflectivity’ (Cronin 2006:62), with a specific focus on the significance of the fact that he migrated to Tasmania. Some of the questions used were the following: Why did you migrate to Tasmania? What kind of activities do you do with other Italians? What does the Australian Italian Association do? And the Club?

The interviews were in Italian, in Venetian, and in English, with varying degrees of language mixing. Their length varied from thirty minutes to approximately two hours. The interviews were transcribed and the transcription was then inspected in search of fragments where specific locations such as a city, a town, an area, or a church were mentioned. Here the data is discussed using illustrative conversational segments.

MULTIPLE CENTRES AND THE ARTICULATION
OF SPACES OF SPEECH

The association and the club are the result of the long history of social and cultural activities of Italians who migrated to the Hobart area. They started in the 1950s and are still active to date. They are now mostly aimed at senior citizens of Italian background, who gather to play cards, share a meal, participate in community events, or simply have a chat (see De Fina 2007 for another example). Moreover, a restaurant, a soccer team, and various social and cultural activities, including some teaching of Italian, revolve around both the association and the club. The first fragment is from an interview with Giovanni where the interviewer is asking about the current and past activities organised by Italians.⁴

(1)

- | | | | |
|----|--------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Giovanni: | E::h <u>così</u> (.) e quest'anno io | So, this year I'm going to have to |
| 2 | | ovviamente devo fare | organise something for the |
| 3 | | qualcosa perché è il centenario | centenary of my fellow countryman |
| 4 | | della morte del mio paesano | Saint Pius the tenth, who has a |
| 5 | | San Pio Decimo che ha una | church dedicated to him in |
| 6 | | chiesa a Taroonna dedicata a lui | Taroonna. Saint Pius the tenth, from |
| 7 | | (.) San Pio de::cimo da Rie::se | Riese, where my mum comes from. |
| 8 | | dove viene mia mamma (.) Ho | I have many cousins there, he is a |
| 9 | | tanti cugini là °eh° è un | true fellow countryman of mine. |
| 10 | | paesano vero e proprio. | |
| 11 | Interviewer: | <u>Beh</u> il Veneto ha dato tanti | Well, Veneto has given many |
| 12 | | Papi. | Popes. |
| 13 | Giovanni: | E anche il bellunese là come si | And the one from Belluno, what |
| 14 | | chiamava quello là? | was his name? Benedict the first? |
| 15 | | °Benedetto primo° Come si | What was the name of the one from |
| 16 | | chiamava quello <i>de Behun?</i> | Belluno? |
| 17 | Interviewer: | Eh non mi rico::rdo. | I don't recall. |
| 18 | Giovanni: | Vittorio Veneto poi = cardinal | Vittorio Veneto, then cardinal of |
| 19 | | <i>de Venessia</i> poi Pa::pa eh::h. | Venice, then Pope, eh. |
| 20 | Interviewer: | Poi <u>Luciani</u> Papa Luciani | Then Luciani, Pope Luciani, that |
| 21 | | quello è stato su poco = ma | wasn't in place for long but he was |
| 22 | | anche lui era veneto. | from Veneto too. |
| 23 | Giovanni: | <i>Sì, xera veneti iera = tanti</i> | Yes, they were from Veneto they |
| 24 | | <i>veneti tanti veneti = gliera tutti</i> | were, many from the Veneto, they |
| 25 | | <i>e tre anca San Pio X cardinal</i> | were the three of them, Saint Pius |
| 26 | | <i>de Venessia (.) o patriarca</i> | the tenth, cardinal of Venice, or |
| 27 | | <i>ancora da Aquileia se ga</i> | Patriarch, still from Aquileia he |
| 28 | | <i>tegnuo (.) ad ogni modo sì beh</i> | kept it. Anyways, yes, we will see |
| 29 | | <i>vedremo Venessia qua n'antra</i> | Venice once again. |

- 30 *volta.*
- 31 Interviewer: Eh certame::nte deve vedere Of course. You must see Venice.
- 32 Venezia.
- 33 Giovanni: Non ho più nessuno della mia I have nobody left of my age in my
- 34 età al mio paesetto più small town, nobody, absolutely
- 35 nessu::no = assolutamente nobody.
- 36 nessu::no.
- 37 Interviewer: Beh da un lato (.) deve anche Well, on one side, you should be
- 38 ringraziare che °in un certo grateful that in a way...
- 39 senso° (.)
- 40 Giovanni: Sono ancora QUA. I'm still here.
- 41 Interviewer: Ehm stavo per dire (.) lei è Eh, I was going to say, you're still
- 42 ancora qua. [laugh] here [laugh]
- 43 Giovanni: *Te si 'ncora qua.* You are still here.

In the first few lines Giovanni conveys that he should organise an event to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the death of Saint Pius X. Through the marked use of the pronoun *io* 'I', grammatically unnecessary in a null-subject language like Italian, and by referring to his organising the celebration as obvious, he is immediately making relevant his role in the community as the one in charge of such events. The celebration is due to the presence of a small church dedicated to the saint in a town in the Hobart area: the saint 'has' a church in Taroona, he holds a place among them. The centre, the discursive tool that makes the telling of this event relevant, is the local Tasmanian space where the saint already finds his place. In Gee's (2005) terms, the church is a generator of meaning for the community, a sign for the creation of space related to being Italian in Australia. It is by virtue of such pre-existing relevance that Giovanni brings in the event, and the celebration is narrated as a portal to once again access this Italian space in Tasmania.

However, this creation of space through the Saint Pius X anniversary is articulated by Giovanni as a personal matter. There is another centre that holds importance for him; that is the small town of Riese where his mother was born (lines 7–10). Although Giovanni is not from the town itself but from another nearby, he claims ownership of the place and establishes a private connection with the saint, whom he twice calls *paesano*, which is the way Italians abroad refer to other Italians who come from the same town, considered a characterisation of intimacy (Baldassar & Pesman 2005). The interviewer, who is also from the Veneto region where Riese is located, extends the connection by mentioning that there have been a few popes from Veneto, and this triggers the use of Venetian by Giovanni, first with *de Behun*, and then with *Venessia*.

What follows is a linguistically remarkable turn. In lines 23–24, Giovanni repeats three times synchronically (Tannen 2007:48–101) the sentence 'they were from Veneto' in Venetian. Each of the three repetitions, however, is phonetically different and represents a dialectal variation of Venetian: the first realisation

of ‘they were’ is *xera* [ˈzɛ:ra], the second *iera* [ˈjɛ:ra], and the third *gliera* [ˈλλɛ:ra]. This linguistic performance reduces the distance between Giovanni, who is from a small country town, and the interviewer, born in a large city, by introducing phonetic variation in the discourse and thus conveying lack of attachment to locally marked linguistic practices. Giovanni is talking to another person from Veneto and appears to choose his discursive strategy—the exhibition of phonological variation—in order to nurture this commonality by eliminating distance. It also establishes a connection between Giovanni and Veneto as a whole, including Venice itself, which he mentions several times. The Veneto region suddenly becomes an alternative centre to Riese; it is a centre shared by the interviewer and the informant, characterised by power and historical importance (lines 26–28). His self-positioning, knowledge of historical facts, and competence in Venetian allow him to shift centres in interaction, as he creates space with the interviewer. In line 43, despite the interviewer not interacting in Venetian, Giovanni decides to use the language again by repeating what the interviewer has just said in Italian. The use of Venetian, here in a closing repetition (Curl, Local, & Walker 2006; Harjunpää & Mäkilähde 2016), is therefore key for Giovanni and the spaces he is creating with the interviewer in that the two share the present interaction, the language itself, and their place of origin. This voluntary choice of the code creates meaning for this specific interaction and, at the same time, indexes other spaces that are relevant to this migration experience.

In the following fragment, we see an example of creation of space that both relates to and transcends the locality from where Giovanni speaks.

(2)

1	Giovanni:	E naturalmente al porto hai già	And of course you’ve already seen
2		visto:: il complesso bronzeo	the bronze at the port dedicated to,
3		dedicato al (.) al figlio di	to the son of Italians.
4		italiani.	
5	Interviewer:	Si = sì l’ho visto = Bernacchi eh.	Yes, yes, I’ve seen it, Bernacchi eh.
6	Giovanni:	Allora il coso:: lo scultore che ha	So the man, the sculptor who made
7		fatto quel lavoro bronzeo lì =	that bronze work there actually
8		infatti è morto un paio di	died a couple of weeks ago, we
9		settimane fa = siamo andati	went to his funeral. He was a
10		anche al funerale suo che era	personal friend. When he was
11		anche un amico persona::le (.) il	young he won a scholarship and
12		quale da giovane aveva vinto una	went to Verona and worked in
13		borsa di stu::dio (.) è andato a	foundries in Verona, where he
14		Vero::na e ha lavorato nelle	learnt to use the Italian technique to
15		fonderie a Verona dove ha	melt all the statues he could find
16		imparato a usare la tecnica	around here, there are many, even
17		italiana per fondere tutte le statue	downtown, fountains etcetera and

- 18 che aveva intorno qui = sono also, also, you know in the
 19 molte (.) anche in città fontane mainland. And he was really very
 20 eccetera e anche anche YOU good, very good indeed, a man of
 21 KNOW IN THE MAINLAND ed era the land also, yes, and he lived in a
 22 veramente bravissimo = proprio small town nearby which was
 23 bravissimo = un uomo >della called Campania [in English],
 24 terra anche sì < e abita::va in un Campania [in Italian], called this
 25 paesetto °vicino° che si chiama by a great landowner there because
 26 <CAMPANIA> Campania (.) così the ground was fertile and he called
 27 chiama::to da un grande it Campania[in Italian], Campania
 28 possessore lì perché la terra era [in English], they say Campania [in
 29 fertile = l'ha chiamato Campania English].
 30 CAMPANIA = dicono loro
 31 CAMPANIA.
 32 Interviewer: YEAH YEAH. Yeah yeah.

Giovanni keeps his attention on the cultural production of Italians in Tasmania and reminds the interlocutor of the presence of another portal in Hobart, the bronze sculpture at the port. This artefact is somehow twice Italian-Tasmanian, as it represents a second-generation historical figure and, in addition, was made by a first-generation migrant. According to Giovanni, not only is this bronze significant because it testifies tangibly to the success of Italians on the island, but it also shows the ability of Italians to take ownership of their own reference figures and post tributes to them in visible arenas. The appropriation of space through this aesthetic act (Phipps & Kay 2014) is here made even more significant by the transnational movements of the sculptor (cf. Lemke 2011:214) and the literal recasting of local objects thanks to skills acquired across national boundaries. While the ‘situated significance’ (Levinson 1983:329) of the sculpture remains in the foreground, other centres are appropriated by Giovanni to generate space that is meaningful for this account. It is again a city in Veneto that holds relevance—Verona in this instance—together with its craftsmanship, which is transportable as well as embedded in its distant location. The sculptural techniques learnt through movements are used to model previously existing bronze items both in Tasmania and in other Australian sites. The mainland, mentioned through code-switching (lines 20–21), is used as a tool to expand the scope of action of the sculptor, who was not only a personal friend of Giovanni but also a translocal person in the sense of someone who has contributed to the moulding of visible items locally and elsewhere (Hall 1996; Wilson 2008). He is defined as a man of the land, probably meaning ‘attached to a land’, although it remains unclear which land Giovanni refers to. What is clear is that he lived in a town nearby (lines 24–25) that is characterised as chiefly Italian-Australian. The tiny hamlet was named Campania by an Italian because of its fertility, which reminded him of the Campania region of Italy, famous for its crops. The town is repeatedly qualified in its bilingual duplicity,

phonologically Australian for non-Italians and dual Italian-and-English-sounding for those like the interviewer who know its toponymical origin. The phonological shift here (lines 26–31) adds detail to the resignification of spaces through movements and through language, at the end being both appropriated and othered in their adapted version (Apter 2006). Giovanni's historical transnational memory combined with linguistic competence allows layers of interpretation that help him to establish meaning in space. In this sense this fragment shows from a different angle how spaces of speech can be shaped by centres in interaction, which are here both brought in and contextually transformed.

In the following fragment, he recounts the birth of ethnically marked spaces in Hobart and goes on to explain the significance of the Italian presence in Tasmania.

(3)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Giovanni: Ci sono state anche due o tre
 2 lettere al direttore del giornale
 3 <i>The Mercury</i> dicendo che questi
 4 italiani si accumulano insieme
 5 non si mettono insieme o
 6 diventano parte della comunità
 7 australiana (.) hanno chiesto
 8 persino poi anche l'opinione OF
 9 THE CHIEF JUSTICE HERE che
 10 anche ha detto sì sarebbe meglio
 11 che questi emigranti si
 12 confondessero in mezzo alla
 13 comunità australiana = non
 14 creassero un quartiere loro
 15 [laugh] e qui c'era invece una
 16 specie di Little Italy là sarto un
 17 calzolaio il barbiere tutti quanti
 18 di italiani.</p> <p>19 Interviewer: YEAH.</p> <p>20 Giovanni: Il caffè e il ristorante. Tutto
 21 quanto italiano (.) e il
 22 DE = DELICATESSEN il negozio di
 23 generi alimentari (.) e allora
 24 lettere sul giornale che questi
 25 italiani non si mescolano con la
 26 comunità (.) quella era =
 27 veramente = è Little Italy la
 28 nostra Little Italy (.) che non è
 29 poi durata molto non è vero?</p> <p>30 Interviewer: Ma com'è stato quando hanno</p> | <p>There have been two or three
 letters to the editor of the
 newspaper <i>The Mercury</i> saying
 that these Italians stick together,
 don't mix or become part of the
 Australian community. They've
 even asked for the opinion of the
 Chief Justice here who said that it
 would be better if these migrants
 spread in the Australian
 community and not create their
 own suburb. But here there was a
 sort of Little Italy, there, a tailor,
 a cobbler, a barber, they all
 belonged to Italians.</p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p>The café, the restaurant.
 Everything was Italian. The
 delicatessen, the delicatessen...
 so there you go letters to the
 newspaper saying that these
 Italians don't mix with the
 community. That was, actually is
 Little Italy, our Little Italy, which
 didn't last very long, did it?</p> <p>So how was it when they started</p> |
|--|--|

- 31 cominciato a vendere le cose selling Italian things? Did you
 32 italiane? Le piaceva? like it?
 33 Giovanni: Ah ma natura::le sono stati Ah, naturally, those were
 34 eventi enormi quelli là perché enormous events, because
 35 naturalmente = vai dentro al naturally you enter the Italian
 36 DELICATESSEN italiano a parte le delicatessen, apart from the new
 37 nuove verdure che loro non vegetables, which they had never
 38 avevano mai visto non è vero? seen, right? And never known,
 39 e mai conosciu::to (.) e poi then different prosciuttos started
 40 comincia a arrivare i prosciutti to arrive, different cheeses, olive
 41 diversi formaggi diversi l'olio oil, the first olive oil, I used to
 42 d'oliva il primo olio d'oliva io lo buy it at the chemist in small
 43 compravo in bottigliette così in bottles like this, you could find it
 44 farmacia (.) si trovava solo in only at the chemist, you couldn't
 45 farmacia una bottiglietta così (.) buy a bottle like this, olive oil, in
 46 fuori nei negozi non si comprava the shops around, eh? Then
 47 l'olio d'oliva °eh° poi l'aceto balsamic vinegar came from
 48 balsamico è venuto da Modena = Modena, right? The way to look
 49 non è vero? È cambiato tutto il at things changed, little by little,
 50 mo::do di vedere un po' alla Italians, a bunch of semi-illiterate
 51 volta hanno (.) gli italiani questa people, basically, have changed
 52 una massa di gente the way of living, of dressing
 53 semianalfabeta praticamente (.) also, clothes, shoes, you know,
 54 hanno cambiato il modo di different people, also way to
 55 vivere = anche di vestire poi relate to each other, to be fair, eh,
 56 vestiti scarpe = sa (.) gente so, that's it, it's incredible the
 57 diversa anche il modo di influence we've had...
 58 relazioni personali sinceramente sometimes when I get asked
 59 (.) eh così è incredibile "What did you Italians do?"
 60 l'influenza che abbiamo avuto (.) "Us?" I always say to those who
 61 alle volte quando mi chiedono are educated at the university of
 62 "Ma cosa facevate voi italiani?" the third age or also down there
 63 "Noi?" E gli dico sempre a quelli at the University of Tasmania, I
 64 che sono educati all'università always used to say at the
 65 della terza età o anche giù beginning: "You know what
 66 all'università della Tasmania Julius Cesar once said? He said
 67 dicevo sempre all'inizio: "lo sai "Veni vidi vici", I said, I came, I
 68 cosa scriveva Giulio Cesare? He saw, I conquered". And we write:
 69 SAID "veni vidi vici" *go ito* (.) "Dear mum, we came, we saw,
 70 son venuto ho visto ho we came, we saw, we concreted.
 71 conquista::to" (.) e noi scriviamo Concrete everywhere".
 72 (.) "cara mamma siamo venuti,
 73 abbiamo visto WE CAME WE SAW
 74 WE CONCRETED (.) CONCRETE
 75 EVERYWHERE".
 76 Interviewer: Eh eh. [laugh] Eh eh. [laugh]

- | | | | |
|----|-----------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 77 | Giovanni: | I TELL gli australiani | I tell the Australians, everywhere |
| 78 | | EVERYWHERE YOU SEE CONCRETE | you see concrete now, and |
| 79 | | NOW AND REMEMBER I SAID THAT | remember, I said, that you father, |
| 80 | | YOU FATHER YOU GRANDFATHER | you grandfather when they were |
| 81 | | camminavano per la città e | walking around the city, they |
| 82 | | quando arrivano a casa | would get bashed by their wives |
| 83 | | ricevevano le bastona::te dalla | because their shoes were all |
| 84 | | moglie che avevano tutte le | muddy. Now you walk around |
| 85 | | scarpe piene di fango (.) adesso | the city, and then you go home |
| 86 | | cammini per la città e dici vai a | and your shoes are clean, before |
| 87 | | casa con le scarpe pulite (.) | we came you went home and your |
| 88 | | prima di noi andavi a casa | shoes were dirty. [laugh] Number |
| 89 | | sempre con le scarpe sporche | one, I said, and then we also went |
| 90 | | [laugh] numero uno <i>go ito</i> e poi | and built the power plants up in the |
| 91 | | siamo andati su a costruire le | forests, eh, and now when you go |
| 92 | | centrali elettriche su ah nelle | home you don't light up a candle, |
| 93 | | foreste (.) e adesso quando vai a | you flick and light comes on. We |
| 94 | | casa non accendi una cande::la | brought you light. I always say |
| 95 | | (.) YOU FLICK (.) AND THE LIGHT | this to them, which is also partly |
| 96 | | COMES ON (.) LA LUCE TE | true. |
| 97 | | L'ABBIAMO PORTATA NOI | |
| 98 | | (.) io gli dico sempre così a loro | |
| 99 | | <u>che in parte è anche una verità::</u> | |

Giovanni recalls that the creation of a cluster of Italian shops was opposed by local residents, so much so that indignant letters were sent to the media. Authorities expressed adverse opinions about Italian spaces in Hobart, which Giovanni invokes as the epitome of the resistance to the newly formed Italian area. In line 11 he employs the codeswitched deictic *here* to refer to the localised response to the dispute and then the Italian *qui* 'here' and *là* 'there' in reference to Italian shops in lines 15–16, thus projecting his belonging to the Tasmanian space whence he speaks; these points are referred to as physically near, located in a space that is adjacent to the one he is currently inhabiting (cf. Haviland 2005). He reiterates the hostility of the Hobart citizens in the second turn as well. He opposes the way the letters to *The Mercury* described Italians as 'those Italians' with his internal placement within the Italian space ('our Little Italy'). He builds his allegiance to the Italian community, which has been othered by Anglo-Australians, and at the same time positions himself in the middle of the dispute. It is also interesting that at the end of the turn when mentioning Little Italy he uses first the past tense and then the present tense (line 26–27). Although by his own admission the Little Italy of Hobart no longer exists and is placed in the past, it is recreated now for and through this interaction. It is meaningful at the very moment when he is telling it.

The interviewer enquires more into the personal experience of the man in relation to the formation of Little Italy in Hobart, which triggers an animated turn where

Giovanni raises the issue of the cultural distance between Italians and Australians. He exemplifies such distance by telling about the change in the use of olive oil. Before Italians started their food businesses, olive oil was available only as a form of medication in pharmacies. By importing it systematically and establishing it within an Italian Australian space, Italians re-appropriated it as a grocery item. Thanks to the newly acquired Italian space, signs could be added and appropriated as ethnically marked products thus acquiring a key transnational image as legitimate Italian items. More importantly, these products are narrated as carriers of change in the wider ‘up-scaled’ (Blommaert 2007) Tasmanian space. They function as an entry point where Giovanni can move from the Italian space placed at the margin of the wider Australian society, to a central position. Starting from line 49, the centre becomes the Tasmanian society around Italians, which is seen as both the receiver of change and the device by which the Italian presence gains prominence. Giovanni recounts this position of Italians, comparing it to the arrival of Caesar in Gaul and citing in Latin the phrase *veni, vidi, vici* and translating it into a codeswitched Italian English phrase. He positions himself as a teacher, enacting the educational space that he used to inhabit, by employing both discourse-pragmatic markers (*non è vero?*) and a high degree of codeswitching in lines 78–80 and 95–97. The Italian influence on Tasmania is characterised as an epic achievement where semiliterate migrants who write letters to their mothers in Italy can achieve a form of triumph thanks to both cultural presence and hard labour. It is evident that the centres here have nothing to do with the local Italian origin that was made relevant in the previous fragments. Rather, pan-Italian spaces in Tasmania are constructed as victorious. It is through the use of space references that this creation of meaning is subjectively possible, and is appropriated and ‘re-ordered’ (Valentine, Sporton, & Bang Nielsen 2008:385) in the here and now. In doing this Giovanni nimbly breaks language borders and mobilises the network of spatial resources at his disposal.

Soon after, Giovanni decides to tell the interviewer about the Australian Italian Association and the changes that have occurred in recent times. Clearly also in this fragment spatial work intersects with language through the deployment of centres that are variously characterised as local and transnational.

(4)

1	Giovanni:	L'unica cosa che mi dispiace è	One thing I'm sorry about is that
2		che abbiano distrutto la	they've destroyed the library, a
3		biblioteca (.) una donazione del	donation from the ministry of
4		ministero degli affari esteri (.)	foreign affairs, seven hundred and
5		<settecentocinquanta> volumi	fifty volumes, all well catalogued.
6		tutti <u>ben</u> catalogati (.) hanno	They have elected a new
7		eletto il comitato nuovo e THAT'S	committee and that's that, it
8		THAT è scomparsa = è scomparsa	disappeared, it disappeared

9	completamente.	completely.
10	Interviewer: E va beh è andata così = però	All right, that's how things go.
11	hanno ancora qualche volume	But they still have some volumes,
12	uno scaffa::le.	a shelf.
13	Giovanni: Poca roba °poca roba° (.) <u>no</u> era	Not much, not much. No, it was a
14	una bella bibliotech::na (.) è una	nice little library. It's a shame
15	vergogna perché i miei amici	because my friends, the Greeks,
16	greci hanno tutte le classi =	they have all their classes, they
17	hanno un centro culturale	have a cultural centre, nobody
18	nessuno del club l'ha mai	from the club has ever touched it,
19	tocca::to è indipendente (.) hanno	it's independent, they have a nice
20	una <u>bella</u> biblioteca hanno le	library, they have their classes
21	classi là (.) ehhh perciò (.) questo	there. Eh, so, this committee,
22	comitato specialmente del club si	especially the club, is particularly
23	interessa dei soldi (5.0) così (.)	concerned with money. So, yes,
24	è difficile introdurre un senso di	it's difficult to create any interest
25	interesse nella cultura o roba del	in culture or things like that.
26	genere.	
27	Interviewer: Eh.	Eh.
28	Giovanni: Avevamo un <u>sacco</u> di conferenze	We used to have heaps of
29	(.) c'era gente dall'università::,	conferences. There were people
30	<u>professo::ri</u> il professor <u>Fiskar</u>	from the university, professors,
31	svizzero incaricato del	professor Fiskar, a Swiss, in
32	dipartimento di tedesco che ha	charge of the German department,
33	fatto Geppetto quando	who played Mister Geppetto when
34	presentavamo Pinocchio (.) era	we presented Pinocchio. He was
35	contento di veni::re <u>entusiasta</u>	happy to come, really enthusiastic.
36	<u>proprio</u> (.) le cose cambiano	Things change, eh.
37	e::h.	

In lines 1–9 Giovanni refers to a small library that he was able to put together when in the Australian Italian Association. The library is a contentious topic among those who revolve around the association and the club as it was dismantled when the association was renovated and most of the books were lost. During the various interviews Giovanni mentioned this library a total of five times, recollecting how it was built and its sad end. For him the library was an important asset for the community, culturally charged and validated by the involvement of Italian institutions (lines 3–4). Giovanni finds it is difficult to create an interest in culture among migrants, and he mentions profit as a current driving force among Italians involved in the association. A great deal of personal investment is expressed in this fragment, evident when he says *bibliotechina*, diminutive for ‘library’, *avevamo* ‘we had’, *è una vergogna* ‘it’s a shame’. Giovanni has dedicated his life to the promotion of Italian culture in Tasmania and in this account he shares his frustration about what happened when he was no longer able to take care of the association.

Interestingly, here the alignment with the activities of other migrant communities is brought in as a relevant reference point (Cohen 2013:109–19); the local cultural and educational practices of Greeks in Tasmania are indicated as the benchmark for how these matters should be administered. According to Giovanni, the Greek cultural centre has shown the right way to go; the Greek centre never allowed interference on the part of the Greek club, because the club is dedicated to activities that are not concerned with culture. Giovanni shifts centre here very clearly and calls into question local practices of *amici* ‘friends’ as significant to the management of cultural assets among Italians. Similarly, the involvement of an academic from the University of Tasmania in the performances organized by the association reinforces both the cultural and the local relevance of these past activities, in relation to which Giovanni positions himself as chief promoter (lines 28–37). Interestingly, such reinforcement comes from someone specifically identified as non-Italian and non-Italian speaking. The spatial work is once again multilayered and linguistically meaningful as a result of reference points used to find direction while cultivating space (La Cecla 2000:102). Moreover, these instances are in line with much recent research that has questioned the usefulness of setting rigid boundaries to define communities (Pennycook 2010; Blommaert & Backus 2013). It is space, instead, that appears to be socially relevant here, and so are the ways in which cultural activities create communality.

In the following fragment, we can see another example of how movement and language are strictly connected.

(5)

- | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Giovanni: Mi ricordo che:: andavo in Italia | I remember I was going to Italy |
| 2 | <i>na volta = e = c'era qui un</i> | once and here there was a man |
| 3 | <u>trentino</u> che m'ha detto (.) “ <i>Ciò</i> | from Trentino who asked me: “So |
| 4 | <i>sentì</i> (.) quando ritorni <i>qua</i> (.) <i>te</i> | listen when you come back here... |
| 5 | <i>ve a Castelfranco?” “Sì”, go ito</i> | are you going to Castelfranco?”. |
| 6 | <i>“a Castelfranco” (.) “Te ve al”</i> | “Yes” I said “to Castelfranco”. |
| 7 | <i>marcà e te me porti °qua° i semi</i> | “You go to the market and bring |
| 8 | <i>de radici °gheto capi° de</i> | me here radicchio seeds, you |
| 9 | <i>radicio” (.) mi ghe porto qua i</i> | understand, radicchio ones”. And I |
| 10 | <i>semi de radicchio e lui li ha</i> | bring him here radicchio seeds and |
| 11 | <i>piantati a casa sua poi ha fatto un</i> | then he sowed them at his place. |
| 12 | <i>po' di soldi = e = si è fatto una</i> | Then he made some money and |
| 13 | <i>casetta lì giù vicino al mare eh a</i> | got a house down there by the sea, |
| 14 | PRIMROSE SA::NDS e ha piantato | eh, in Primrose Sands and he |
| 15 | <i>= aveva un bell'orto molto più</i> | sowed, he had a nice garden, |
| 16 | <i>grande lì e piantava sti radicchi</i> | much larger there, and sowed this |
| 17 | <i>trevisani = infatti ogni tanto me</i> | Treviso radicchio, he gave me |
| 18 | <i>ne dava uno.</i> | some from time to time. |

This extract further elaborates on the spatial work in interaction where linguistic abilities and choice of codes become particularly salient. Giovanni recalls an episode where an acquaintance asked him to bring some radicchio seeds from Italy. Radicchio is a leaf vegetable cultivated and used in the northeast of the country and as such points to specific spaces with which both interlocutors are familiar so much so that the interviewer reacts to this topic with a constant smile. In this sense introducing this element creates shared empathic ground in this recount (Hayashi 1996:11–13) where both Giovanni and the interviewer acknowledge the importance of this item. Planting radicchio is a typical example of constructing ethnic space abroad, as described by Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain 2013:176–217. The communal life around a shared sign is made relevant in the Italian Tasmanian context through the re-enactment of behaviours that are fixed in time as pre-migration habits. At the same time, this space is resignified by the retelling of a visit to Italy and by connecting it with different parts of the island (lines 14–18). More interestingly, the reported exchange between Giovanni and his acquaintance shows the creation of a different form of communication, that is, the linguistic bridge between Trentino and Venetian speakers. Many varieties of Trentino share a degree of typological similarity with Venetian that translates into partial mutual intelligibility (Zamboni 1979; Pellegrini 1992). Giovanni enacts this mutual intelligibility by using Venetian as if the sharing of radicchio and the sharing of linguistic tools were contiguous for him. The two speakers could dispense with Italian while talking to each other, thereby creating a bond that allows one of them to ask for a favour. The favour would result in new radicchio leaves grown in Tasmania, in turn shared as a result of amicable bonds actively created through spaces of speech. Giovanni also uses Italian in this exchange, however, signalling the ambiguous nature of the choice of Venetian. The centres shift dynamically between transversal Veneto-Trentino-Italian planes and local contexts of interaction, where by using a variety of linguistic resources including abundant deictics (lines 2, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16) and specific locations (line 14), Giovanni situates his common life with the other Italians. In other words, the combination of linguistic tools help Giovanni to ‘construe and construct the very context within which that interaction is taking place’ (Sidnell & Enfield 2012:309).

In the following fragment, a different combination of linguistic tools ‘cooperate for expression’ (Merleau-Ponty 1960:85) so that Giovanni can take position.

(6)

1	Giovanni: E così questa è la comunità	And so this is the Italian
2	italiana (.) è ancora attiva (.) oltre	community, it is still active and
3	a quello = oh devo <menzionare>	besides, oh, I must mention that
4	che c’è una processione italiana	there is an Italian procession once
5	na volta all’ <u>anno</u> .	a year.

- 6 Interviewer: Eh. Right.
- 7 Giovanni: L'unica °processione° della The only procession in Tasmania
- 8 Tasmania per le vie della città che through the streets of the city. It
- 9 è ancora la processione di San is the Saint Carlo Borromeo
- 10 Carlo Borromeo al cui era procession to whom our church
- 11 dedicata la nostra chie::sa a North in North Hobart was dedicated,
- 12 Ho::bart = vicino al club = next to the club, through the road
- 13 attraverso strada che naturalmente which naturally has been closed
- 14 è stata chiusa da molti anni e for many years and now is a kind
- 15 adesso è una specie di ah:: (.) non of, mm, I don't know, mm,
- 16 so:: ah:: (5.0) una specie di quasi museum, data storage for the
- 17 museo = raccolta di dati per la Hobart dioceses.
- 18 diocesi di Ho::bart.
- 19 Interviewer: Ma non ci si può entrare lì? So no one can get in?
- 20 Giovanni: Sì °WELL° cioè ci sono delle suore Yes, well, I mean there are nuns,
- 21 = delle volte suonare *te go ito* you could ring I guess, as I said,
- 22 perché è l'ora che anch'io vada a because it's time also for me to
- 23 suonare = a vedere se il mio:: ring and see if my baptismal
- 24 fonte battesimale sia ancora là = fount is still there. The others
- 25 che quegli altri lo muovono = la move stuff, priests do not have
- 26 roba lo::ro che i preti non hanno respect for these things. Last time
- 27 rispetto di queste (.) cose l'ultima I went there the fount was still
- 28 volta che sono andato là era there but many other things, even
- 29 ancora lì il fonte però:: molti = the station of the cross, had
- 30 persino di vie crucis erano disappeared. They had seven or
- 31 scomparse avevano sette otto eight statues of Saints and Mary,
- 32 statue di santi e madonne = li kept there that they no longer
- 33 accumulate che non usavano più used so all our stuff, the benches,
- 34 perciò tutta la nostra roba i banchi have vanished all of them and of
- 35 sono svaniti tutti quanti e course all the valuables there like
- 36 naturalmente le ricchezze che the golden ostensory donated by
- 37 erano lì dentro poi come [international company name], by
- 38 l'ostensorio d'oro donato tra the way, that one, and other
- 39 l'altro da [international company things donated as well are gone.
- 40 name] è stato donato quello là e They belong to them. The church
- 41 altre cose donate da noi sono was built on land that the
- 42 andate °via° = appartiene a loro = cathedral owns. Anyway if you
- 43 la chiesa è stata costruita su too have to do with priests, never
- 44 terreno che appartiene alla build anything on their land
- 45 cattedrale = però anche se hai a because you don't have rights.
- 46 che fare coi preti non costruire
- 47 mai sulla loro terra perché tu
- 48 diritti non ce n'hai.
- 49 Interviewer: Eh eh [laugh]. Eh eh [laugh].

In this final fragment we see that the Italian community is described as still alive in Tasmania on two different levels. On one level Italians still organise a range of activities including passing through the land during religious processions and visiting Italian Tasmanian localities such as a Catholic church founded by Italians. On another level their presence is marked by the existence of repositories that are meant to testify not only to the participation of the community in its religious life (Fortier 2000) but also to the attention of international companies that connect Italy and other places (lines 38–40). His subscribing to the category of Italians abroad and placing his contribution in a transnational perspective enables him to elevate his Tasmanian Italian space and, at the same time, to articulate such space as ‘culturally meaningful’ (Duranti 1994:49) because of this validation from elsewhere. Yet the space created through donations to the church is seen as precarious, where a division between the clergy and laypeople causes objects to disappear. Not all spaces created by Italians in Hobart are successfully appropriated, and the placement of valuable objects within sites that mark cultural presence is not described as a safe strategy to claim rights (lines 41–48). The area of the church is recounted as Italian but associated with out-group members—nuns and priests—who are Italian but do not (or who no longer) share space with the community.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

When recounting episodes of their experience of movement individuals invoke instances where spaces were brought to life and, in parallel, it is the moment-to-moment unfolding of talk that brings about space. This article has investigated the tensions between the creation of space in interaction and the use of a number of centres, appropriated as meaningful points in relation to which migrants ‘take position’ (Merleau-Ponty 1945:225). Tasmanian Italians offer a good entry point into these processes in light not only of their remote location, which makes centre-periphery dynamics particularly relevant (Wang, Spotti, Juffermans, Cornips, Kroon, & Blommaert 2014), but also of their being completely ignored in the transnational ‘master narratives’ (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008:385) of Italian diasporas.

The data analysed here shows that Giovanni, when deciphering his past and present experiences (Villareal 2014:269), deploys a number of meaningful centres to make sense of his migration. These centres are often related to the very local dwelling sites from where he happens to speak. They are variously characterised as Italian, Australian, or Tasmanian and made significant along a fluctuating pattern of membership categorisation—for example, the case of the procession of Saint Carlo Borromeo through the streets of Hobart or the reference to how other groups managed their cultural activities in Tasmania. But the centres this migrant can exploit in interaction are also those located elsewhere: a small town in Veneto, a large area in the north of Italy, as well as the Australian mainland. The key actor here is able to navigate around these sites both locally and transnationally,

constructing them while he retells his experiences. He does so by using an ample range of linguistic resources, among which code choice, codeswitching, and intentional exposure of phonological variation are particularly evident. It is through the skilful management of these resources that he is able to create space. Giovanni tells episodes of success, failure, validation, and personal attachments, and concomitantly, his language allows him to transport and rebuild value. In doing so, centres are employed as momentarily fixed orienting points (Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain 2013:266–69) that resonate with other points to create spaces of speech precisely because they are both discursively mediated and spatially distributed (Pennycook 2016). These centres are therefore not simply reference points used as deictic tools, but foci endowed with different powers that are used through and for the spaces of speech they help to shape. Continuing this examination of this highly personalised configuration of space and language practices might open a rear window onto the linguistics of Italian migration, one that could help to understand the nexus of mobility, situated meaning-making, and hybrid language use.

APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

plain text	Italian, Latin
SMALL CAPS	English
<i>italics</i>	Venetian
ALL CAPS	louder speech
<u>underlined</u>	stress through amplitude or pitch
(.)	short pause
(5.0)	longer pause
[]	paralinguistic elements
::	phonemic lengthening
◦	soft tone or lower volume
=	latch
> <	faster talk
< >	slower talk

NOTES

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¹As well as place intended as social space.

²For instance, students in a classroom can experience the existence of a sign such as a teacher’s manual that shapes the interaction among them, but access it through alternative portals that can include their own textbook’s explanations or the interaction with the teacher (Gee 2005:221–22).

³The name is fictitious.

⁴The data has been transcribed according to the conventions given in the appendix.

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