



Mapping Italy Through Translations

Tracing the Evolution from a Geographical Region to a Nation-State

Sandal Bhardwaj

Assistant Professor (Italian Studies)

Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies,
English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India

Abstract: Through the prism of translations, the present research explores how Italy morphed from a geographical region to a nation-state. The study underlines the essential role of human geography in the building of the Italian identity by looking at the dissemination of knowledge through translations. The difference between geography and space is stressed, as well as the way geographies influence language development. Consequently, the formation of a common language reinforces Italy's sense of nationalism. The findings of the study have substantial ramifications for analyzing the intricate relationships between geography, language, and the emergence of nation-states.

Keywords - Translations, Space, Geography, Language Formation, Nationalism, Knowledge Dissemination

I. INTRODUCTION

The "Geography" stems from the Greek term "geo" (the earth) and "graph" (to write), demonstrating the significance of geography in Translation Studies. This relationship, according to Bassnett, is crucial to comprehending translation processes since spatial factors have a significant impact on how our world communicates and evolves. In order to gain a greater awareness of how geography affects the translation process, this research endeavor aims to investigate the relationship between geography and the conceptualization of translation within Translation Studies.

II. THE DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH TRANSLATION

Globalization has rendered it clear how essential translation is for intercultural dialogue. But until recently, geography was overlooked in translation research. In *The Spatial Turn*, Warf and Arias pointed out a three-decade expansion of the humanities and social sciences' interest in geography and space. This enlarged realm of translation studies by examining the relationship between translation and geographical location strengthens the knowledge of its impact and offers up new avenues for research. Translation has always aided effective global communication, information transfer, the preservation of culture, and economic growth.

III. POSITIONING GEOGRAPHIC DIMENSION IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

According to Gideon Tūrî, translations are more complex than a simple transfer of meaning, as each of the elements involved - the original text, the translator, and the translated text - are each within their own unique set of circumstances. (Tūrî, *Descriptive Translation Studies, and Beyond*).

The Latin root of the term refers to "crossing across," whereas the Greek word "metaphrasis" means "speaking across boundaries." Recognizing this exchange requires taking into account the spatial dimension,

and translation and geography combine to create an interdisciplinary field that includes the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. It bridges various disciplines and investigates the geographical aspect of translation studies.

Numerous fields of study are included under the umbrella term "human geography," including urban, tourism, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, religious, and behavioral geography. With a close connection to Translation Studies, it investigates international social, political, and economic concerns.

3.1 Human Geography

Anthropo-geography examines the non-physical facets of how people interact with and shape the environment. By investigating the multifaceted connection between language and the spatial distribution of human populations, human geography plays a key role in influencing language development. It investigates the implications of geographical factors on language development, propagation, and evolution, including migration, colonization, trade, and cultural exchanges. Understanding how languages adapt and change in response to environmental, social, and economic circumstances is made possible by the study of human geography. It offers insights into the processes of language development, linguistic diversity, and language revitalization by examining patterns of language distribution, dialect variants, and language contact zones. It emphasizes how language is dynamic in its interactions with geography, culture, and society, providing insightful viewpoints for comprehending the intricate interplay between people and their linguistic settings. The impact of the environment and interpersonal relations are both examined.

Geographical factors significantly impact the historical context, current linguistic norms, and communities that translators work with. Dialects in languages are widespread and might vary based on location. For instance, in the context of Indian geography, *Braj Bhasha* and *Avadhi* are different from *Khadi Boli*.

3.2 'Space' versus 'Geography'

In Translation Studies, the notion of "space" is used metaphorically, drawing connections to disciplines like comparative literature, anthropology, and philosophy. An interdisciplinary approach is offered by research on the concept of "space of/in translation". The 2016 book *Translation and Geography* by Federico Italiano addresses how translation affects Westerners' perceptions worldwide with a focus on literary and imaginative geographies. Italiano employs a social-spatial framework to analyze how translation interacts with its geographic setting.

IV. ROLE OF GEOGRAPHY IN LANGUAGE FORMATION

It is challenging to monitor the advancement and dissemination of languages. However, linguists determine the earliest stages of communication and the spread of prehistoric languages. There is a theory that a language may contain several dialects. Numerous modern languages have originated in the Proto-Indo-European language, which was spoken by central Eurasians in prehistoric times. Latin evolved into distinctive tongues that shared features with Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian.

Language shift is influenced by topography. Given that many languages have Latin roots, there is an influential genetic component. The development of languages like Romanian, Bulgarian, Albanian, and modern Greek has been influenced by the borrowing of elements from other tongues involved in the adoption of new languages. Communities are divided into different regions of a country due to artificial boundaries, disagreements concerning religion and ethnicity, and other factors.

Studies on translation address the genesis of linguistic diversity. The myth of the *Tower of Babel*, which blames the diversity of languages on divine retribution, is well-known. However, these misconceptions are applied in translation studies to aid in interlanguage communication. Eric Jacobson underlines the Roman innovation of translation in the first century BC and draws a distinction between word-for-word and sense-for-sense translation, signaling an alteration in perspective in the area. (Bassnett, *Translation Studies*).

Research into the nature of the connection between geographical distribution and translation is increasingly the primary concern for language activists throughout Europe, particularly in France and Italy. Giordano Bruno's idea of a plurality of worlds is analogous to the plurality of languages, which is considered a blessing and a source of richness rather than a curse. (Giordano Bruno, *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*).

4.1 Italian Tradition of Translation

In the words of Snell-Hornby in *The Turns of Translation Studies*, Translation Studies have focused on linguistic territories rather than geographical territories, as the translation was formerly considered as occurring exclusively between languages. As per Naoki Sakai, according to new perspectives, a common national language promotes state sovereignty and a sense of identity while also encouraging divisions between oneself and others. (*The Trans-Pacific Imagination*),

“Italian has its roots in one of the dialects namely Florentine (*Fiorentino*) that emerged from Latin in Italy, namely the kind of Tuscan spoken in Florence”. (Barbour and Carmichael, “*Language and Nationalism in Italy*”). De Mauro expressed “The literary Tuscan, which Bembo codified in *Prose della Vulgar lingua* in 1525, was widely regarded as the model for the primary literary language of the peninsula's educated elite, or *pan-italiano*, and served as the base for the standard Italian language”. (*Storia Linguistica dell'Italia Unita*)

Under the Fascist power, standard Italian established a literary language. Many citizens were introduced to the language for the first time courtesy of increased education and promotion. The administration placed a high priority on the value of a common language in crafting a society that fosters unity and identity. According to Pietralunga and Ferme, “Thus, under Fascism, translation became the object of numerous analyses and observations by Italian intellectuals. (“*Tradurre è Tradire: La Traduzione Come Sovversione Culturale sotto Il Fascismo.*”).

Early modern Europe experienced a significant role in translation in the emergence of cultural movements. The printing-fueled Renaissance led to widespread translation initiatives that aided in the dissemination of ideas. Bible translations into common vernacular helped to linguistically integrate Europe. Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio all made significant contributions to the development of Italian literature in the 1300s, determining an appreciation of national identity. The sixteenth century witnessed extensive growth and acceptance of Italian as a unique language. Major literary masterpieces like Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and historical books like Guicciardini's *History of Italy* and Machiavelli's *The Prince* were translated during this time, along with translations of the Bible and classics. (Philemon, *The Preface to the Reader. Translation/History/Culture*). Prioritizing the nation is a linguistic hierarchy. The process of switching from one's mother tongue to the prevailing common language requires automatic translation.

Nation-building is impeded by the absence of an identifiable national language, argues Joseph's Language and Identity. Language may define nations and borders, according to Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. Through the expanded adoption of print media and the development of national awareness, the modern era encouraged the concept of "one nation, one country, one language."

A unified language became important also for communication as a result of the migration from the south to the north for industrial jobs during Italy's 1950s economic boom. Television and the mass media promoted the adoption of a "uniform national spoken standard language." Language standardization entails modifying the language, granting it precedence over other vernaculars. The canonization of literature diminishes the importance of mother tongues and enhances links to the national language. Because of translation and neo-nationalism, Italy was united in 1861 as a result of Ugo Foscolo's writings in the 1800s.

Translation and nationalism are closely intertwined, as translation plays a vital role in the formation and maintenance of a nation's identity. Translation can be used to create new versions of texts that reflect a nation's values and culture or to bring foreign works into the national discourse. Cronin says “One of the main purposes of translation is to advance particular regional, local, or national identities. To do this, inter-lingual translation may produce new versions of national literature classics or bring prominent foreign literary works”. (*Translation and Globalization*)

Italian scholar Bruno Migliorini remarked on the crucial role of translation in *Storia della Lingua Italiana*. He maintained an intense focus on the tenuous connection between language homogeneity, national identity, and the influence of French works on Italian publishing. The significance of translation in nation-building has been accentuated by Migliorini's ideas becoming more widely accepted among modern academics.

CONCLUSION

As an outcome, this research provided insight into the nuanced relationship between geographical distribution and translation while encompassing Italy. It exhibits how translations shaped Italy's emergence as a unified country from a geographical region. We can observe how political discourses, literary translations, and language standardization all help facilitate the establishment of the Italian identity. Future studies can investigate minority languages, regional identities, and technological developments. In a globalized environment, recognizing the relationship between geography and translation improves intercultural understanding.

References

- Anderson, B. (2016). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Original Spread of Nationalism* (2nd ed.). London: Verso. (p. 145)
- Barbour, S., & Carmichael, C. (2000). *Language and Nationalism in Europe*. Routledge.
- Bassnett, S. (2002). *Translation Studies (New Accents Ser.)*. Routledge. (p. 43)
- Cronin, M. (2003). *Translation and Globalization*. London: Routledge. (p. 69)
- Italiano, F. (2016). *Translation and Geography. New Perspectives in Translation and Interpreting Studies*.
- Mauro, T. D. (1993). *Storia Linguistica dell'Italia Unita*. Roma: Laterza.
- Migliorini, B. (1978). *Storia della Lingua Italiana* (5th ed.). Florence: Sansoni.
- Pietralunga, S., & Ferme, V. (2016). *Tradurre è tradire: la traduzione come sovversione culturale sotto il fascismo*. *Italia*, 93(2), 298-314.
- Philemon. (1684). *The Preface to the Reader*.
- Sakai, N. (2017). *The Trans-Pacific Imagination: Rethinking Boundary, Culture, and Society. The Modern Regime of Translation and the Emergence of the Nation*.
- Snell-Hornby, M. (Ed.). (2006). *The Turns of Translation Studies: New Paradigms or Shifting Viewpoints?* (Benjamins Translation Library). Amsterdam. (p. 104)
- Țurî, G. (1995). *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Warf, B., & Arias, S. (Eds.). (2008). *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Routledge Studies in Human Geography Ser.). Routledge.

Web References

- Barbour, Stephen, and Catherine Carmichael, eds. "Language and Nationalism in Italy." Academia Edu, September 1, 2000. https://www.academia.edu/440543/Language_and_Nationalism_in_Italy.
- Bouchard, Norma, and Valerio Ferme. "Nation(s) and Translation in Italian Cultural and Literary History." *Annali d'Italianistica* 38 (2020): 1+. *Gale Literature Resource Center* (accessed January 11, 2023). <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A666875904/LitRC?u=googlescholar&sid=googleScholar&xid=cac55558>.
- Ehteshami, S. "Geographical Dimension and Translation: A Conceptual Enquiry." Accessed January 11, 2023. *Geographical Dimension and Translation: A Conceptual Inquiry* <https://journal.translationstudies.it>
- Giordano Bruno | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. "Giordano Bruno | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy." Accessed January 10, 2023. <https://iep.utm.edu/giordano-bruno/>.

Hosington, Brenda M. “*Translation and Print Culture in Early Modern Europe.*” *Renaissance Studies* 29, no. 1 (January 4, 2015): 5–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/rest.12111>.

Pietralunga, Mark, and Valerio Ferme. “*Tradurre è Tradire: La Traduzione Come Sovversione Culturale Sotto Il Fascismo.*” *Italica* 81, no. 3 (October 1, 2004): 437.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/27668938>.

Robbins, Henry, and David Crystal. “*Language - Changes through Geographical Movement.*” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed January 10, 2023.
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/language>.

Thomas, Abby. “*Modern Italy’s Changing Language and Its Role in Nationalism.*” *Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita*. Accessed January 11, 2023.

www.britannica.com/topic/language/Changes-through-geographical-movement

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/I-promessi-sposi-novel-by-Manzoni>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proto-Indo-Europeans>

<https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=LitRC&u=googlescholar&id=GALE|A666875904&v=2.1&it=r&sid=googleScholar&asid=cac55558>

<https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=history>

