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MANIPULATION AND PARTIALITY IN ITALIAN TRANSLATIONS OF FOREIGN NEWS ABOUT ITALY: THREE CASE STUDIES

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Abstract

This paper analyses the Italian translations of three articles on Italian politics published in 2015 in the *New York Times* and the *Financial Times*. It looks at the discursive re-localization of these three translations when they were circulated in the context of Italy's politics and media. As argued by Schäffner and Bassnett (2010: 2), "Media reports about political events are always forms of recontextualisation, and any recontextualisation involves transformations. Recontextualisation and transformation are particularly complex where translation is involved." The three translations analysed in this paper reveal a double act of recontextualization: British and American media discuss the Italian economy or politics following a certain articulation of national images which often derives from a pre-existing, standard representation of Italy, or "frame", which is replicated through news translation (Valdeón 2016); then, when these texts became known in Italy through their translation, the Italian news items they discussed were heavily contested within Italy itself. This shift in discourse (re-)production is often attributed to the perceived manipulation of foreign texts about Italy for political purposes, and translated news has become an area of conflict between different ideological interests. The three case studies discussed in this paper are evidence that translation is used as an instrument of political legitimization (or delegitimization). If we view translation in a political context, then translation may also imply manipulation and suppression (sometimes even as an effect of bad translation) and may therefore become, in and of itself, a deeply political act.

1. Introduction

During the penultimate episode of the last series of *How I Met Your Mother*, a popular American sitcom, aired in 2013, the characters argue as to what to do with an old chair as one of them is about to go to Italy. In the original English dialogue, one of the characters said:

Ted, Italy doesn't need something that is wrinkled, red and leaky and smells like booze and narcotics, they've already got former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (Lancini 2013).

The episode was aired unofficially in Italy with a subtitled Italian translation in May 2013. The above line was translated as follows:

Ted, l'Italia non ha bisogno di qualcosa di raggrinzito, rosso e logoro, e che puzza di alcol e droghe. Hanno già l'ex premier Silvio Berlusconi (Lancini 2013).

This is a pretty accurate translation, as it fitted the frame created by American and British media about Italy, and specifically Berlusconi, who was widely discredited outside Italy because of the many scandals evolving on his supposedly unstatesmanlike personal life. In February 2014, the episode was finally screened on Italian TV channel Italia 1, which was (and is still) owned by Berlusconi himself. The dubbed translation of the line was:

L'Italia ha già abbastanza problemi con chi governa il Paese (Buttita 2014).

whose back-translation is:

Italy already has enough problems with those who rule the country (my translation).

This translation was considered by many as plain censorship and further evidence of the fact that Berlusconi would not tolerate any dissenting voice, even of a comical nature, within his own TV network. The original meaning of the line was heavily manipulated, depriving it of any negative allusion to the Italian Prime Minister.

This paper will analyse the Italian translations of three articles, one from the *Financial Times* and two from the *New York Times*, all published in 2015, which discussed Italian political events and which became the centrepiece of very intense political and media debate in Italy. What happened to *How I Met Your Mother* is an indication of how translations of foreign texts may become part of the political discourse of the target culture. Not dissimilarly to the translation of the American sit-com, when the three articles discussed in this paper became known in Italy through their Italian translation, they circulated within a frame shaped by political motivations and interests. The authors of the translations and the media where they appeared were accused of having manipulated the texts in order to present a partial view of their original meaning. This happened, crucially, *because of* the translated texts *and* the translation strategies used, which became themselves part of the political debate. Debates on these three translations have revolved not just around the issues discussed in the translated texts themselves but also around the supposed quality of translation, the translation strategies used, the supposed manipulations involved in them and the translator's supposed political partiality.

2. Ideologies at work. Partiality and manipulation in translation

Foreign news is part of the media culture which, in turn, plays a crucial role in shaping the political debate of a country. In this context, translations are routinely used as political items: according to Schäffner (2004: 117), "political discourse relies on translation; translation is in fact part of the development of discourse, and a bridge between various discourses". It is mainly through translations that information crosses borders and is made available in different countries, as discourse within the public sphere is shaped by the availability of translated texts, which in turn fuels political

action. However, the role of translation is not always evident. Schäffner and Bassnett (2010: 13) argue that:

Translation, although often invisible in the field of politics, is actually an integral part of political activity. Which texts get translated, from and into which languages is itself already a political decision.

Political and news texts are translated in order to spread knowledge about foreign political affairs and, if and when they are translated, they are also used as part of political discourse itself. Indeed, translations can be part of political conflicts, as they can be used to legitimize or delegitimize certain ideological interests, which in turn may also determine *how* texts are translated: the act of translating and the translation strategies employed by the translator are influenced by ideological factors. Inevitably, then, the meaning in translations is always partial as it undergoes a shift from the original text. According to Tymoczko (2003), all translations are inherently partial as they can never be fully exhaustive in terms of the meaning conveyed. This is because translators, just like the authors of the original texts, must make choices as to which aspect of meaning should be foregrounded in their translations. This partiality in the production of a text – whether original or translated – impacts on the creation of meaning and on how meaning is spread in society. By being partisan (and inevitably so), translators engage with society, as their texts circulate within society and emphasize certain meanings at the expense of others.

On this basis, a “neutral” translation simply cannot exist because the translator always makes certain choices on the basis of his or her background knowledge, culture and ideology. The choices translators make in translating texts give birth to partial texts, and by being partial, they are also partisan and thus “participate in the dialectic of power, the ongoing process of political discourse, and strategies for social change” (Tymoczko 2000: 24). It is translators who place the translated texts on the ideological plane: as argued by Hatim and Mason (1997: 122), translators can exercise a certain power, or “mediation”, that is, “the extent to which translators intervene in the transfer process, feeding their own knowledge and beliefs into their processing of a text”, by which they can orient the text ideologically. The translator’s beliefs and knowledge induce him/her to make certain choices when translating, and these choices inevitably reflect the political interests at work in the social context where the translator works. Translation can therefore be seen as a process in which issues of power are continually addressed, and this is done in the wider cultural and political context of the target language:

Translation thus is not simply an act of faithful reproduction but, rather, a deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication – and even, in some cases, of *falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes*. In these ways translators, as much as creative writers and politicians, participate in the powerful acts that create knowledge and shape culture (Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002: xx1; italics mine).

Tymoczko and Gentzler are clearly pointing to the fact that translators are active agents in political discourse, in a cross-discursive perspective in which politicians,

translators and journalists all consider translations as ideologically contested arenas: translators take part in political discussions by manipulating and recontextualizing foreign texts, while politicians and journalists themselves comment on the contents of the translated texts as well as, crucially, the translation strategies employed in translating (which inevitably means manipulating) texts, which are commonly assumed to be the domain of translators.

Textual manipulation is always implicit in any kind of translation, which is a re-codification of a text coming from one linguistic and cultural context into a new one. In a sense, manipulation is inevitable: original meanings codified in the source language need to be reshaped for the new language, culture and audience. In particular, translations of news are, by their own nature, very unstable in terms of communication of meaning. This is due to the complex interlingual and intercultural processes involved in the translation of news items from one language to another (and, often, to yet another language) (Bielsa and Bassnett 2009: 13-15). News translation consists in the creation of a new text addressed to a new audience with a new language, a text circulating in a new cultural and social context, with both the form and the content of the original text altered, and therefore necessarily partial. In this sense, the role of the translator is the same as that of the journalist, who selects and writes news items (*ibid.*: 64-65). In this context, manipulation of translation is inevitable, but it is the role of news translation itself which has to be reformulated on the basis of the peculiarities of the translated texts:

At no stage is a text likely to be translated in the traditional sense of the term, following word order and sentence patterns. What is more likely is that different textual practices will take place, including summary, paraphrase, addition and subtraction, reshaping in accordance with target culture conventions, rewriting in a particular house style. In other words, what happens to news stories is that they undergo a series of textual transformations, all of which are underpinned by acculturation strategies (Bassnett 2005: 125).

The “textual transformations” and “acculturation strategies” of translated news texts largely answer to certain political pressures of the target culture. The translated news, in turn, often become part of the political discourse of the target culture.

3. Three case studies

On July 22, 2015, the *New York Times* published an article on Rome by Gaia Pianigiani, one of the newspaper’s Italian correspondents. Pianigiani discussed the pitiful state of the Italian capital city, its crime problem, traffic and poor rubbish collection service, and described its then-mayor, Ignazio Marino, as an honest politician who was nevertheless powerless against the widespread corruption of the city’s administration. Rome had long been plagued by scandals, and past administrations before Marino’s had done little or nothing to tackle the inbred corruption of the city’s convoluted bureaucracy and crumbling public services. The “Mafia Capitale” scandal, which had broken out in late 2014, revealed widespread corruption and a network of politicians and criminals involved in the management of refugee and migrant reception centres but which extended to all sorts of criminal activities, including rubbish collection (Damilano 2015; Squires 2014). Marino was not involved in “Mafia Capitale” at all and he managed to

project an image of himself as an honest politician totally at odds with the corrupt practices of past politicians. However, he had been under attack for a long time by many, including leading personalities from the Partito Democratico (PD), Italy's main centre-left party, to which Marino himself belonged, as well as most media, who accused Marino of incompetence and corruption.

The *NYT* article was apparently validating the arguments of Marino's enemies, who claimed that the city under his administration was in ruins. The article appeared in three different editions of the *NYT*, two in print (the New York edition and the International edition) and one online, with the same contents but, as is standard practice for the *New York Times*, with different headlines:

International edition:

A virtuous mayor vs. Rome's vice (Pianigiani 2015a).

New York edition:

The Mayor's honest, but is that enough to halt the eternal city's decline? (Pianigiani 2015b).

Online edition:

Romans put little faith in mayor as their ancient city degrades (Pianigiani 2015c).

The three headlines gave different angles of the story: the International edition foregrounded Marino's skills and honesty, but the NY edition's praise for his skills is overshadowed by the city's serious problems, while the headline of the online edition highlighted Marino's low degree of popularity. The contents of the article initially appeared in Italy through ANSA, Italy's most important news agency, which mentioned the article as it appeared in the International edition of the *NYT* (ANSA even published a photo of its front page), but included the translation of the headline of the New York edition as:

Il sindaco è onesto, ma lo è abbastanza per fermare il declino della città eterna? (ANSA 2015).

This is a very accurate translation of the original headline of the New York edition, which read like:

The Mayor's honest, but is that enough to halt the eternal city's decline? (Pianigiani 2015b).

After a number of frantic calls made to the author of the article by the mayor's press office to clarify the matter of the different headlines¹, Marino attacked ANSA for supposedly having mistranslated the headline:

Se si traducesse così la versione di latino o inglese il voto non sarebbe stato superiore al tre. Se qualcuno ha bisogno di un aiuto con le traduzioni di inglese siamo disponibili... Nessuno pretende che le agenzie conoscano l'inglese però è stato tradotto "Il sindaco è

¹ This was revealed by Pianigiani herself in a phone conversation with the author of this paper.

onesto ma lo è abbastanza per fermare il declino della città eterna?” Il titolo in inglese, lingua che conosco, significa “Un sindaco virtuoso contro i vizi di Roma” (*Il Tempo* 2015).

If a Latin or an English text were translated like this, the grade would not be higher than a fail. If anybody needs any help with translations into English, we are available. Nobody expects news agencies to know English but [the headline] was translated as “Il sindaco è onesto, ma lo è abbastanza per fermare il declino della città eterna?”. The headline in English, a language I know, means “Un sindaco virtuoso contro i vizi di Roma” (my translation).

Marino’s criticism of ANSA’s supposedly wrong translation was a moot point, as the real issue was ANSA’s choice to translate the more hostile headline rather than the more Marino-friendly one. It was indeed the former headline rather than the latter, untranslated one which had a wide echo in Italian news media, most of which picked up the story and used it to further fuel the venomous campaign against Rome’s mayor. The choice as to what to translate (and how to translate it) can shape the political debate, but this also depends on the resonance that a news item has: earlier, in January 2015, the *New York Times* had published an article with similarly strong criticism of Marino’s administration, but that time no Italian news agency or newspaper had decided to pick up the story and translate the article.

The second case study involves a piece by Wolfgang Münchau, called “Italy’s economic recovery is not what it seems” (Münchau 2015), which was published in the *Financial Times* on November 15, 2015 and projected a gloomy prospect for Italy’s economy under the premiership of Matteo Renzi, the leader of the PD. Münchau has often written about Italy in the *Financial Times*, and the Italian translation of one of his articles on Romano Prodi’s 2006 electoral victory had been very controversial (Caimotto 2010). Renzi became Italy’s Prime Minister in February 2014 and he had to face Italy’s huge public debt, which had long been a burden to the country’s economy. Official data released in May 2015 recorded a slight economic recovery as the GDP grew by 0.3% (Politi 2015a), but Renzi’s economic reforms, including tax deductions for first home owners, were still considered by many insufficient, or even counter-productive, to tackle the poor state of Italy’s economy and to prevent the risk of leaving the Eurozone. Indeed, in “Italy’s economic recovery is not what it seems”, Münchau cast many doubts on the effectiveness of Renzi’s economic reforms and accused him of being too shy with banks, as he failed to introduce stricter rules for their financial activities. Münchau’s article was reported in Italy mainly by the right-wing press, such as *Il Giornale* and *Il Tempo*, while government-friendly newspapers such as *La Repubblica* quickly dismissed Münchau’s pessimism. A full translation of the article never appeared in the Italian press, and only a translated extract was part of a piece by Mario Valenza published in *Il Giornale*:

“Attenti, uno tsunami finanziario sta per travolgere l’Italia e il governo Renzi non è attrezzato per reggere l’onda devastante della nuova crisi. Per questo, siete destinati a uscire dall’euro, con tutto quello che ne consegue”. Parole e musica dell’economista tedesco Wolfgang Münchau, che nel suo editoriale sul *Financial Times* colpisce durissimo Palazzo Chigi (Valenza 2015).

“Watch out, a financial tsunami is about to swamp Italy, and the Renzi government is not equipped to withstand the devastating wave of this new crisis. As a result, you are destined to leave the euro, with all the ensuing consequences.” Words and music by German economist Wolfgang Münchau, who hits Palazzo Chigi very hard in his editorial² (my translation).

Interestingly, the alleged translation does not match any passage of Münchau’s article, and there is no equivalent expression of “uno tsunami finanziario” in the original piece (in English, the metaphor “financial tsunami” is well established, but there is nothing of the sort in the original text)³. The only passages in Münchau’s original article which vaguely recall the Italian translation are these:

But what worries me is that the Italian government is not ready for when the impact of the slowdown in China and emerging markets hits Europe. Friday’s preliminary figures for Eurozone gross domestic product show that the slowdown has started. [...] If Italy fails to bounce back strongly from this recession, it is hard to see how it can stay in the eurozone (Münchau 2015).

The Italian translation which circulated in the Italian media was therefore very different from the original. Münchau’s text presents a hypothesis, that is, that Italy’s economy is so troubled that the country may have to leave the euro (“If Italy fails to bounce back strongly from this recession, it is hard to see how it can stay in the Eurozone”), and might even be better off by leaving it. The Italian translation, if it can be called so, is much more drastic, and it assumes that leaving the euro is inevitable.

Neither Renzi nor the PD made any public statement or comment on the alleged translation of Münchau’s piece, preferring to ignore it altogether. Antonio Angeli commented in *Il Tempo* on the lack of reaction from Renzi and his government when Münchau’s piece was published, and in reporting the bleak scenarios on the economy outlined by Münchau, Angeli concluded sarcastically:

Insomma Renzi non convince il *Financial Times*. Ma questa frase, evidentemente, per il PD è intraducibile (Angeli 2016).

Renzi does not convince the *Financial Times*, but evidently this sentence is untranslatable for the PD (my translation).

A third event involving translations from the foreign press took place about a month after the publication of Münchau’s article. On 30 December 2015, Beppe Grillo’s blog published the translation of an article written by James Politi for the *Financial Times*. Grillo is an Italian comedian and the founder of the Movimento Cinque Stelle (Five-Star Movement). Founded in 2009, the Movimento has usually been portrayed as a populist movement. It indeed advocated direct democracy against the alleged corrupt political, financial and media establishment which, in the opinion of the Movimento’s

² Münchau is actually not an economist, but an associate editor and a weekly columnist of the *Financial Times*.

³ In my email exchange with Münchau, he was puzzled by the presence of “uno tsunami finanziario” in the Italian text.

leaders, had long ruled Italy. For this reason, its candidates were chosen by the registered users of its online platform, on the assumption that they would not be chosen by restricted establishment circles but rather by the “people”. Grillo’s blog, www.beppe-grillo.it, was used as an instrument of information countering the official establishment news outlets, which were seen as biased towards the elite’s interests.

Politi’s article appeared in two slightly different versions, one in print and the other online, with two different headlines:

Print version:

Five star movement comes of age (Politi 2015b).

Online version:

Italy’s Five Star Movement wants to be taken seriously (Politi 2015c).

The blog translated and published the print version of the article, including its headline (Grillo 2015). The translation had a short introduction, in which the *Financial Times* is said to be “uno dei quotidiani più autorevoli e letti al mondo” (“one of the world’s most prestigious and widely read newspapers”). The emphasis on the *Financial Times*’ reputation aimed at validating the Movimento’s frequent claim that it had become a reliable political movement ready to govern Italy. The headline of the piece in the blog which includes the translation of the article was as follows:

Financial Times: “Il Movimento 5 Stelle è maturo per il governo” (Grillo 2015).

The quotation within inverted commas is meant to be the headline of the original article. However, the quotation literally means that the Movimento is ripe or ready for government (“Il Movimento 5 Stelle è maturo per il governo” means that “Five-Star Movement is ready for office”), an amplification of the original headline of the *Financial Times*’ print version (“Five star movement comes of age”), which did not necessarily imply the Movimento’s readiness for government. To make matters even more complicated, the body of the translated text opens with a shorter translation of the headline of the print version of the *Financial Times*’ article, a translation whose meaning is closer to the original: “Il Movimento 5 Stelle è maturo” (“Five-Star Movement is mature”). From that point onward, the translation appearing in the blog follows the article which was published in the print version of the *Financial Times* and only occasionally changes the original text, albeit in some significant ways. An example of these changes is the subhead:

Print version:

Party with an eccentric past seeks to reinvent itself as serious alternative to Renzi (Politi 2015b).

Online version:

Protest group has come a long way since its eccentric start and is now the country’s second party (Politi 2015c).

Translation:

Un partito dal passato eccentrico si reinventa come seria alternativa a Renzi (Grillo 2015).

The translator followed the print edition, but changes the main verb, whereby “seeks to reinvent itself” becomes “si reinventa”, turning an effort into a certainty. At the beginning of the text, the translation again followed the print version:

Print version:

When the Five Star Movement burst into Italian politics in 2009 during the financial crisis, it was defined by uncompromising protests and the burly sardonic figure of its leader, the comedian Beppe Grillo (Politi 2015b).

Online version:

When the populist Five Star Movement burst into Italian politics in 2009 during the financial crisis, it was defined by uncompromising protests and the burly, sardonic figure of its leader, the comedian Beppe Grillo (Politi 2015c).

Translation:

Quando il M5S esplose nella politica italiana nel 2009 durante la crisi economica, era caratterizzato da una protesta senza compromessi e dalla burlesca, sardonica figura del suo leader, il comico Beppe Grillo (Grillo 2015).

“The populist” again appeared in the online edition, but not in the printed version, which was chosen as the source text for the translation.

The publication of the translation of the *Financial Times* article in Grillo’s blog attracted some polemical responses, as Grillo was accused of having manipulated the translation of the original article. The first to take issue with the supposedly wrong translation was Giampaolo Galli, an MP for the PD (Galli 2016). In his blog, Galli compared the online version of the article, linked at the bottom of Galli’s blog entry itself, with Grillo’s translation, which was however based on the print version, and noted that “Italy’s Five Star Movement wants to be taken seriously” was translated with “Il Movimento 5 Stelle è maturo per il governo” (“Five-Star Movement is ready for office”). Similar differences were noticed between the original subhead (“Protest group has come a long way since its eccentric start and is now the country’s second party”) and the translation given by Grillo (“Un partito dal passato eccentrico si reinventa come seria alternativa a Renzi”, which means “Party with an eccentric past seeks to reinvent itself as serious alternative to Renzi”). Galli also pointed out that the adjective “populist” had also disappeared from the translation of the first sentence of the article, finally claiming that “È falso il titolo ed è falsa la traduzione dell’articolo” (“The headline is fake, and so is the translation of the article”).

Galli’s attack on Grillo’s supposedly manipulated translation was picked up by several Italian newspapers. *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, a newspaper which is generally not hostile to Grillo’s Movimento, referred to Galli’s statements, summarizing the controversial points: “Due versioni del titolo, un aggettivo scomparso e una traduzione “libera”” (“Two versions of the headline, a missing adjective and a “free” translation”). It then commented on “seria alternativa a Renzi”, which is not present in the online version:

E proprio quest’ultima versione (“seria alternativa a Renzi”) non trova alcun riscontro con la traduzione letterale (*Il Fatto Quotidiano* 2016).

This last version (“serious alternative to Renzi”) does not coincide with the literal translation (my translation).

Italian journalist Massimo Gramellini took up the news and insisted on the supposed mistranslation published in the blog, with a short article in the Italian newspaper *La Stampa*, titled, quite poignantly, “Grillost in Translation” (Gramellini 2016). Gramellini sums up all the events surrounding the translation, including Galli’s blog entry, again ignoring the print version of the text and instead focusing on the obvious differences between the online text of the FT article and its translation on Beppe Grillo’s blog. In his conclusions he argued:

Ora, delle due l’una. O i grillini non conoscono l’inglese, e allora sono dei dilettanti né più né meno (ma forse un po’ di più) di chi ci governa. Oppure lo conoscono così bene da avere volutamente manipolato la realtà a fini di propaganda (Gramellini 2016).

Now, it’s one of two things. Either the “grillini” do not know English, and are therefore amateurs, no more no less (but perhaps a bit more) than those who govern us, or they know English so well that they have deliberately manipulated reality for propaganda purposes (my translation).

Similar accusations, including a very detailed account of the supposed manipulations, were given by Jacopo Iacoboni, again in *La Stampa* (Iacoboni 2016), in a piece significantly called “Omissioni, aggiunte e traduzioni forzate: così Grillo strumentalizza il *Financial Times*” (“Omissions, additions and forced translations: that’s how Grillo manipulates the *Financial Times*”). In his analysis of Grillo’s translation of the subhead, Iacoboni speaks of “Traduzione allegra” (“Carefree translation”), pointing out the supposed addition of the adjective “seria” in the subhead of the Italian text and the omission of “populista” at the start of the translation. Iacoboni also speaks of the “factual and impartial” bias of the original article, which was instead changed into a more positive judgement of the Five Star Movement.

In reporting the news, the Italian newspaper *Il Messaggero* (2016) was, to the best of my knowledge, the only one to concede that the wrong translation was due to the difference between the paper and the online version of the same article:

La differenza – a quanto sembra – potrebbe essere dovuta alla diversa impaginazione tra la versione cartacea e quella online.

The difference could apparently be due to the different layout of the printed paper and the online editions (my translation).

Grillo answered on Twitter on 5 January 2016 to all this criticism by inviting Gallo to “buy a dictionary” (Grillo 2016).

4. Conclusions

The translated texts analysed in this paper and the reactions to their circulation in Italy emphasize the notion that the issues of manipulation and partiality are immediately raised when translated news items are circulated and used to legitimize (or

delegitimize) certain politicians or parties. It is difficult to ascertain whether the three translated texts were deliberately manipulated, or whether the choice of the specific texts to be translated (i.e. online or printed) was in itself an act of political expediency. What is certainly true is that politicians and journalists have argued that these translations had been somehow manipulated because they seemed to serve specific political purposes. Politicians and journalists discussed these translations by using a rudimentary metalanguage based on intuitive concepts of translation theory and practice. The yardstick by which the validity of a translation seems to be measured is its literal closeness to the original, and translations seen as “free” are usually associated with manipulation, such as when commentators accused Grillo of providing a deliberately partial or wrong translation. Marino’s scornful remarks on language skills as well as Grillo’s invitation to his detractors to “buy a dictionary” are indications of the fact that not only are specific political issues hotly debated, but that language and translation competence can also become part of political arguments. Furthermore, Grillo’s and Marino’s appeals to correctness and faithfulness in translation touch on the issue of partiality in translation and advocate a supposedly correct style of translation from a self-projected position of pre-eminence and power.

The three case studies analysed in this paper have proved that translation itself is often heavily contested and that certain translations are considered to be “wrong” because they are seen as the product of textual manipulation, with specific political interests in mind. Translated newspaper articles on Italian politics can clearly perform a very important function in Italy’s political discourse. Translated news, as well as *how* it is translated and whether it is translated at all, is part of the political debate and is used in favour of or against a party or a politician. If we view translation in a political context, as indeed we should, the three case studies show that translation is also, in and of itself, an arena of political struggle.

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