

TRANSLATION LESSON PLANS FOR INTERMEDIATE ITALIAN

1. Translating memes
2. Translating prose with a focus on language identity
3. Translating poetry
4. Intersemiotic translation
5. Translating humor

Selected bibliography:

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Sample Lesson Plan:

Lesson Plan 4 Intersemiotic Translation

Duration: 3 fifty-minute class periods

Texts: Excerpt from *Io e te* by Niccolò Ammanniti and two final scenes from the film with the same title by Bernardo Bertolucci.

As homework before the first class, students will read the final chapter of *Io e te*, coming to class prepared to discuss it.

Learning goals:

- To look at intersemiotic translation or transposition in order to understand a director's choices when creating a film based on a novel
- To experience creating subtitles and dubbing
- To explore elements of cultural translation

First class instructional sequence:

Warm-up (10 min.): The students have read the last chapter of *Io e te* as homework. They will start the lesson with summarizing and discussing what happened in the final part of the book. The instructor will play the song mentioned in the novel 'Montagne verdi' by Marcella Bella.

Group work (15 min.): In groups of 3 or 4, students will be given a handout to fill in together, which will guide their discussion. The idea is to reenact the final pages of the novel: if you were a film director, how would you recreate the final scene of *Io e te*? How would you construct the space? Which color palette would you choose? Which actors would you pick for the roles of Lorenzo and Olivia? Would you keep the Italian song that Ammaniti chooses in the book ("Montagne verdi" by Marcella Bella) or would you pick a different song? How would you end the film? What would the two characters do? Would you maintain the same message that Ammaniti leaves us with at the very end?

Discussion in plenum (15 min.): Each group reports on their idea for turning the novel ending into a film scene.

Introduction to film language (10 min.): The instructor goes over the main concepts of cinematography and film terminology, including camera terms and movements, lighting, sound, and editing.

Homework: Students write a short composition summarizing the decisions they made in class about transposing the novel ending into a film scene.

Second class instructional sequence:

Warm up (5-10 min.): Class conversation about which new ideas the students wrote about in their short compositions.

Introduction to Bernardo Bertolucci and the film (10-15 min.): The instructor introduces the life and work of the famous Italian director, then briefly introduces the film.

Film scene (10 min.): The class watches the last segment of *Io e te* without audio.

Group work (10-15 min.): Students pretend that they were hired to dub the film. In small groups, they write a few lines (4 or 5 maximum) pronounced by the characters in the film scene based on their choices from the novel. Students write some examples on the board.

Class discussion (10 min.): Together the students and the instructor look at the examples written on the board and comment on the different choices and which could be preferable.

Homework: Students are given the lyrics of David Bowie's song 'Space Oddity' and they are asked to translate them into Italian.

Third class instructional sequence

Warm up (10 min.): The students comment on the song by David Bowie and discuss their translations into Italian.

Reading exercise (15 min.): Students are given a handout with the transcripts from the final scene from *Io e te*. As a class, students read the dialogue between Lorenzo and Olivia aloud. They then compare the film dialogue with the one in the novel.

Film watching (10 min.): Together we watch the final scene of the film with audio.

Final discussion (15 min.): The class discusses Bertolucci's choices in transposing the ending of the novel into a film scene. What are the main differences? Why did Bertolucci make these choices? Why did he change the song? Do you agree with him? Compare the translation that you wrote of David Bowie's song and the one written by Mogol. What is so drastically different?

Potential homework: Students write comments about their experience in intersemiotic translation on their translation diary.

Examples of memes from my first Lesson Plan, *Translating Memes*



Literal translation: "I wasn't expecting this one"

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"WHEN YOUR MOTHER HAS MOPPED THE FLOOR BUT YOU FORGOT YOUR PHONE IN YOUR BEDROOM"

Texts to use for my second lesson plan on language identity:

"Tu sussurri in una lingua improbabile, in bilico tra un somalo infantile e un inglese da balera estiva, e dici, facendo scoppiare un desiderio che hai dentro da tanto tempo: "Vorrei imparare l'italiano, nonna. Per starvi più vicina."

L'italiano, la lingua di chi ha colonizzato i nostri antenati a Brava come a Mogadiscio, una lingua un tempo nemica, un tempo negriera, ma che ora è diventata, per una generazione che va da mia madre a me, la lingua dei nostri affetti. Dei nostri più intimi segreti. La lingua che ci completa nonostante le sue contraddizioni.

Lingua di Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, Elsa Morante e Dacia Maraini. Lingua di Pap Khouma, Amir Issaa, Leila El Houssi, Takoua Ben Mohamed e Djarah Kan.

Lingua un tempo singolare e ora plurale.

Lingua mediterranea, lingua di incroci.

La mia *hooyo* ascolta (con una certa felicità, va detto) il tuo proposito di imparare l'italiano. Finalmente intravede fra voi un terreno comune. Un futuro in cui non avrete bisogno di interpreti o dizionari. O di me a farvi da ponte. E ti sorride, Soraya. E ti dice "Bella ciao" dandoti una prima lezione di lingua, e di vita, in un italiano che splende come una cometa. Tu trovi le parole che sono appena uscite dalla bocca di *ayeyo* così musicali, così perfette, così italiane. "Bella ciao," le rispondi. Già la ami la lingua italiana. Già te la senti addosso come un vestito di seta pregiato." (p.16)

You whisper in an improbable language, balancing between a childish Somali and a summer dancehall English, and you say, igniting a desire you've held inside for a long time: "I would like to learn Italian, grandma. To be closer to you."

Italian, the language of those who colonized our ancestors in Brava and in Mogadishu, a language once hostile, once tyrannical, but which has now become, for the generation spanning from my mother to me, the language of our affections. Of our most intimate secrets. The language that completes us despite its contradictions.

The language of Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, Elsa Morante and Dacia Maraini. The language of Pap Khouma, Amir Issaa, Leila El Houssi, Takoua Ben Mohamed, and Djarah Kan.

A language once singular and now plural.

A Mediterranean language, a language of crossings.

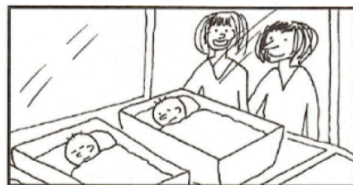
My *hooyo* listens (with a certain happiness, I should say) to your resolution to learn Italian. She finally has a glimpse of a common ground between you. A future when you will not need interpreters or dictionaries. Or me as a bridge. And she smiles at you, Soraya. And she says "Bella ciao" giving you a first lesson in language, and in life, in an Italian that shines like a comet. You find the words that just came out from *ayeyo's* mouth so musical, so perfect, so italian. "Bella ciao" you reply. You already love the Italian language. You already feel it on you like a fine silk dress. (*my translation*)

Da *In altre parole (In other words)* by Jumpha Lahiri:

Lo smarrimento che avverto a Venezia è simile a quello che mi prende quando scrivo in italiano. Nonostante la pianta dei sestieri, mi perdo. Il labirinto veneziano trascende la propria pianta come una lingua trascende la propria grammatica. Camminare per Venezia, così come scrivere in italiano, è un'esperienza spiazzante. Devo arrendermi. Mentre scrivo affronto tantissimi vicoli ciechi, tanti angoli angusti da cui devo districarmi. Devo abbandonare certe strade. Devo correggermi continuamente. Ci sono momenti in italiano, così come a Venezia, in cui mi sento soffocata, sconvolta. Poi giro e, quando meno me lo aspetto, mi ritrovo in un luogo sperduto, silenzioso, splendente. (98)

The disorientation that I feel in Venice is similar to the one I feel when I write in Italian. In spite of the map of the *sestieri*, I get lost. The Venetian maze transcends its own map the way a language transcends its own grammar. Walking in Venice, like writing in Italian, is a displacing experience. I have to surrender. When I write I face many blind alleys/dead ends, so many tight corners from which I need to disentangle. I have to abandon certain streets. I have to continuously correct myself. There are moments in Italian, much like in Venice, when I feel suffocated, distraught. Then I turn and, when I least expect it, I find myself in an isolated, silent, resplendent place. (*my translation*)

Example of texts for my fifth lesson plan, *Translating humor*:



— Lo abbiamo già iscritto all'università dove farà gli studi, preso contatto con una ragazza di buona famiglia che sposerà e prenotato cicli di sedute dallo psicologo e dal consulente matrimoniale.

La Settimana Enigmistica

— We already enrolled him in the college where he will complete his studies, we contacted a girl from a good family that will marry him, and we booked multiple sessions with a therapist and a marriage counselor.

Translating humor

Teresa Mannino



Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy: Stanlio e Olio

