

Culturural and Language Aspects and the Problem of Regional Disintegration

The Case of Italy

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Abstract—This article sets the question of state-unity, which is actual for every modern state, and discusses the foundation that is based on important things for the nation to unite as a common language and culture. A young Italian state serves as an example of the existing problem: an insufficient promotion of the Italian language together with the historically formed regionalism, and a wide spread of dialects can become a reason for political instability and for a weakness of a state unity.

Keywords—*educational environment; culture; localism; language; association; unification*

I. INTRODUCTION

The situation in today's socio-cultural policy of the states, sets new requirements for the educational systems, and, consequently, defines new conditions under which the role of ethno-cultural education of school and university students (or young people in general) is significantly underestimated both among the parental community and in the pedagogical community. The problem of interagency disunity in the spheres of education, science and culture negatively affects the processes of conservation and reproduction of material and spiritual heritage. It gives rise to misunderstanding and underestimation of the importance of the formation of ethno-cultural educational environment in society.

Moreover, the ongoing process of globalization being regarded as the menace of losing cultural features of the world necessitates ethno-cultural education first of all for the young people in their homeland. As rightly pointed out in the paper [12] "Disclosure and awareness of ethnic culture's semantic features will allow Modern School to build educational process in the continuity with the best traditions of the past, will inevitably go on to establish an organic connection of goals, objectives, educational content within modern schoolchildren phenomenon" [12. P. 1].

The basis of state educational policy amongst all modern states should be the priority of national spiritual values that define certain tasks in order to harmonize both national and ethno-cultural relations; this may preserve and support ethnic and national cultural identity, languages and cultures of all ethno-cultural groups. Being the link between the past and

the future, ethno-cultural education promotes culture formation and a tolerant personality capable for ethnical self-determination, creating qualities of an ideal citizen.

The purpose of this article is to identify and justify the social and pedagogical effects of student's ethno-cultural education during studying Italian history, culture and language. Indeed, when we begin this process, one immediately understands that there are some problems in the process of formation of the Italian state, where interaction of regional cultures and languages has a big and complicated background. We hope that after reading this subject, the students will begin to understand that, despite all the complexity of the historical process of formation of their country and people, as an ethnos, their country and the people living therein could have a good future.

The main study approaches are ethno-cultural and lingvo-culturological. The result of complex education include both an ethno-cultural and a lingvo-culturological experience within the presented research. Some pedagogical effect such as: emergence sustained interest and the need for ethnic and cultural values development, ethnic and cultural knowledge enrichment, developing a sense of belonging to people's history and culture, and the integrity of ethnic and cultural values perception in the unity of all national art components effects. This article may be useful for professors and teachers developing ethno-cultural educational programs.

In our point of view, the discussion should be started from the studying of the process called "Risorgimento": it has influence and a significant role in the formation of the Italian state.

In the scientific literature there is a well-known historical term known as "Risorgimento" (ital. Il Risorgimento – revival, renewal), designating national-liberation movement of the Italian people against overseas domination, for forming a united Italian state, and it is also a period when this movement occurred (the end of XVIII century – 1861). It is considered that Risorgimento has come to the end in 1870 when Rome joined the Italian kingdom (in 1871 Rome became capital of Italy). At the beginning, this term was used by analogy with Il Rinascimento (Renaissance) and used mainly in a cultural-literary context. Only later, by means of

Vittorio Alfieri (1749-1803), did its value began to extend towards prospective association of Italy in the political, cultural and national context.

1861 was marked for Apennine peninsula by the struggle beginning for association of “the separated cities-states” as they were called in Europe at that time. The integration process - Il Risorgimento (or the Italian Unification)¹ - has affected regions, which throughout long history have been separated and strongly differed in their customs, spoke in different languages (dialects)² and were in a condition of constant enmity. Only part of the population of the Italian peninsula used modern Italian language, the others spoke on various regional dialects which were obscure to representatives of other regions.

Such dissociation involved vulnerability in front of external aggressors, and it became the reason of conquerer Italian territories by a number of European states in the 19th century. The answer to these invasions became a powerful, national-patriotic, and emancipating movement directed on association of city-states in the United Nation within the limits of one state. However, if association of northern city-states on a basis of one level of economic-social and cultural development still was somehow possible, joining the South³ by the armies under command of patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi, became a real challenge for the North, where southerners were perceived as savages and gangsters. Trade and economic or political relations with the south almost didn't exist.

II. DIFFICULTIES OF THE ITALIAN ASSOCIATION THROUGH THE PRISM OF SOUTH-NORTH RELATIONS

Throughout all history after Unification, (in the Italian historiography: D.R. - Dopo Il Risorgimento) the south of Italy was always characterized as the traditional society consisting of micro-cities that were socially divided and separated. Prominent Italian philosopher, politician and founder of Communist party of Italy Antonio Gramsci has made the following definition of Southern community which was very popular up to 70s of the 20th century: “the big agrarian association consisting of three social strata: amorphous weight of the dispersed farmers, small and average rural bourgeois intelligentsia and powerful land owners and intelligentsia». The politician and historian Giustino Fortunato after some years after association of Italy *цкшеу* about the North and the South, that “it seems, as though the North is accompanied by a dead body, and the

¹ Period of movement of unification resulted, since an epoch of Napoleonic board and the Viennese Congress of 1815 and up to Ex-Prussian war of 1871, though last *città irredente (Trieste and Trento)* has not been attached to Kingdom Italy up to a victory of Italy in the First World War.

² In given article the problem of definition of concepts “language” and “dialect”, concerning Italian peninsula, is taken out for research frameworks.

³ In the text “South” and “North” are used as the symbolical categories corresponding to the Italian categories “Il Sud” and “Il Nord”. They can be treated as synonyms to concepts “inhabitants of the south of Italy” and “inhabitants of the north of Italy” accordingly. The concept “North” is a political synonym of geographical concept “Profondo Nord” (“Deep North”) which in 90th has entered into political terminology.

South has lost too many, having refused from the independence” [21].

Already in the 20th century, the famous Italian economist, P.S. Labini, on the basis of research of the poorest quarters of Naples and Palermo, asserted that economic development is not connected in any way with social development [11]. He said that the income of a city and its good reputation can coincide. However, for example, in a case with Siena (the city in the south of Italy), there exists a big difference in the question of where the basic part of the profit of townspeople comes from. In poor quarters as the profit is got from the affairs which are on the verge of the law, or illegal [1]. The researcher Italo Talia writes that the given conclusions can be extended to four main areas of the South (Naples, Palermo, Catania and Bari) and not only on the poorest areas, but also on a wide spectrum of surrounding territories where borders of the homogeneous closely bound cultural landscape are filled by the new identity which is not neither rural, nor city [20].

The South is characterized by inhabitants of the North as “paradise occupied by devils”, a place where there is “an industrialization without development”, where there are “cathedrals in desert”, and where “expropriation is a method of use of territory”. They describe the South as a blessed land with warm climate and plentiful crops but damned to be occupied by the wild, barbarous and immoral population to operate with which it is possible only by force. Such relation has generated in the North a long-going tradition of antimeridionalismo (the anti-southern points of view), reduced to the tendency to identify the South with corruption and the Italian state as infected to deal with this corruption. Northerners thereby underline notorious draught of southerners to “amoral familism”, expressed, for example, in exclusive protection of interests of the so-called “Family”.

The south has got stuck between the past and future somewhere on modernization boondocks. Its heterogeneity occurs from the feudal system not varying by centuries, which sad heritage of a steel of fraud, gangsterism, and mafia clans which slowed down and is slowing down now any civil or economic initiative. Besides, the identity of the South is just formed and, even in such cities as Naples or Palermo, falls short of internal binding unity. Thus, despite lacking identity, the south has no tendency toward political secession and similar the aspiration vis-à-vis southerners consider as egoism.

As many modern Italian and foreign scientists Putnam do southern culture responsible for backwardness of this region. According to its opinion, advantages of the North come from medieval Italian cities-states, and defects of the South from feudal kingdom of authoritative emperor Frederic II [10]. The right-populist nationalistic party League of the North⁴ (Lega Nord) [4] agrees with this point of view. It supports

⁴ Lega Nord – the full name of the organisation speaks for itself: “North League for independence of Padania” (“Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania”). North league – federation of several leagues: Leagues of Lombardy, Veneto and other regional movements among which the biggest there was the League of Lombardy based in 1984 by Umberto Bossi.

the secession of Padania⁵ (Northern Italy) from the rest of the country. Leaders of League assert, that contrast between the “productive” North and the “parasitic” South can be explained by cultural characteristics of northern and southern Italians. The League stops in a step from biological racism, speaking about a cultural component [9] and holding to the “geographical racism” and “geographical nationalism”. And if in the South such kind of co-habitation to the North is considered to be a symbiosis, the North is defined only as “parasitism”.

According to League, Padanians and other Italians are practically two different races. Such statements, by the way, have a certain basis in a type of data of linguistic and genetic researches (see, for example, [3], [21]). Thereupon it is necessary to note in particular such objective factor as mountain chains in the north of Italy which is a barrier on a way of “gene flow” for resident populations since prehistory times in the central and southern parts of Italy.

Indeed, as it is mentioned in [3. P. 2-3] “During the Last Glacial Maximum, most of the country provided a refugium not only for animal and plant species. Migrations during the Late Paleolithic, the Neolithic and, even more so, the Metal Ages characterized the complex peopling process of pre-historic Italy, leaving more (e.g. Greeks) or less (e.g. Etruscans) clear signatures. Under Roman rule, there were heavy demographic reshuffles caused by warfare and slavery and this had a significant impact on population composition. In more recent times, further contribution to the population heterogeneity came from invasions of the Barbarians (Lombards and Normans among others) and Arabs. All these events explain at least part of the genetic structure of extant Italian populations, structured in two main geographic clusters (North-West and South-East).”

Capocasa M., et al. [3. P. 3] are referring to the historic ethno-linguistic Italian minorities (which total is about 5% of the Italian population). These minorities change according to area of their origin (central and southeastern Europe) and demographic history, and the majority of them settled in their present locations in relatively recent times (from the Middle Ages to the 18th century).

The authors [3. P. 3] rightly point out that “The linguistic isolation from neighboring populations and, in many cases, the settlement as small communities in secluded areas make such groups very important when evaluating the entire spectrum of biodiversity of Italian populations. At present, twelve ethno-linguistic minorities are officially safeguarded by Italian legislation: Albanian, Catalan, Croatian, French, Franco-provençal, Friulian, German, Greek, Ladin, Occitan, Slovene and Sardinian. Furthermore, other minor linguistic groups are recognized at regional level (e.g. Tabarkian in Sardinia) and ancient linguistic substrates can be still recognized in marginal areas.” In this regard, we note that the authors very well illustrate their findings with the help of the figures, see. e.g. [3. P. 7, Fig. 1], where geographic location of the populations is analyzed in this study is

⁵ Term “Padania” has received wide application in the beginning of 90th XX century from giving of League of the North and has strongly politicized character.

presented. One can see geographic isolates, geo-linguistic isolates, linguistic isolates, and open populations. We should note that linguistic isolates prevail in the central and southern parts of Italy; geographic and geo-linguistic isolates prevail in the northern parts of Italy and in Sardinia.

Conclusions of this work [3] are in good agreement with the analysis carried out in the paper [20], where the relationship between genetic and linguistic diversification in human populations of Italy has been explored to interpret some specific issues in its history.

Stefania Sarno et al. state [19. P. 1]: “The Albanian-speaking minorities of Sicily and Southern Italy (Arbereshe) constitute an important portion of the ethno-linguistic variability of Italy. Their linguistic isolation from neighboring Italian populations and their documented migration history make such minorities particularly effective for investigating the interplay between cultural, geographic and historical factors. Nevertheless, the extent of Arbereshe genetic relationships with the Balkan homeland and the Italian recipient populations has been only partially investigated.”

Their results revealed that the considered “Arbereshe groups, despite speaking closely related languages and sharing common cultural features, actually experienced diverging genetic histories. The estimated proportions of genetic admixture confirm the tight relationship of Calabrian Arbereshe with modern Albanian populations in accordance with linguistic hypotheses. On the other hand, population stratification and/or an increased permeability of linguistic and geographic barriers may be hypothesized for Sicilian groups to account for their partial similarity with Greek populations and their higher levels of local admixture. These processes ultimately resulted in the differential acquisition or preservation of specific paternal lineages by the present-day Arbereshe communities.”

These factors, as well as a number of others, undoubtedly, promoted the occurrence of small closed genetically, linguistically and culturally homogeneous communities (for example German, Ladin and Arbereshe ethno-linguistic groups). The given factor promoted the occurrence of a variety of ethno-linguistic communities in Italy.

The League sings of the powerful culture focused on work of Padanians which practically costs on the verge of Catholic and Protestant religion, with elements of Protestant ethics and neoliberalism in economy; it speaks about the superiority of Padanians as modern and morally surpassing community, hardworking and able-bodied. The south is perceived as «altro che Italia» (“something another, than Italy”), in the past were won by Arabs, where the population it is faster the same Arabs or Africans in a counterbalance to white race in the north which does its prospering. As to the general identity of the North on the basis of the Celtic past, researcher of Italy M. Huysseune writes, that periodic intrusions of Spain, France and Austria have not affected so essentially descendants of Northerners, as Turks, Arabs and Normans on southerners [9].

Thus, the young Italian state is obvious, that, having united in necessity to react to political changes occurring in Europe, in particular on falling of empire of Napoleon and on attempts of Austria to supervise the Italian peninsula was uniform only in minds of intellectuals. This practice, until now, remains the state with strong regional distinctions.

III. RISORGIMENTO AND A PROBLEM OF INTERACTION OF LANGUAGES (DIALECTS)

According to de Mauro, at the moment of association in 1861, only 2.5 % of the population of the Italian peninsula spoke close to an archaic variant of the Florentine dialect; the others used various local dialects and localisms [2]. However, supporters of the Risorgimento considered that universal distribution of standard Italian language to the masses or even instead of local dialects that is a powerful sign on became one of its greatest achievements that the Italian nation all the same has developed. Thus up to today both in the north, and in the south remains the whole kaleidoscope of dialects and languages of national minorities of Italy [6].

As researcher Carlo Ruzza writes, the Italian dialects are not “dialects of the Italian language”. They also are not its derivatives, in that sense in which the dialects that have occurred from one parent language are usually understood and which have historically developed in regions. Italian roots on one of variants of the language which has occurred from the Latin period of the first millennium of our era, and is truer from a Tuscan dialect in its Florentine variant. Thus, from the historical point of view, Italian can be considered not as a basis of regional dialects, but as a parallel developing language [18].

Modern Italian is based on the Roman and Neo-Latin dialects and have certain accurately outlined areas of distribution. The main line of demarcation separates northern group of dialects from central and southern in which were mainly presented the speech of Ancient Rome. In dissociation, inhabitants of each village (“borgo”) already spoke with the local features, and only a small part of the formed people used the standardized Italian language. Such localisms rallied members of a community and allocated them from the members of other communities by the place of their origin, dialect, accent and traditions. Localism and the feeling of an accessory to a concrete place of residing (topos) supports the general history. A dialect and the religion received the name *campanilismo*⁶, and it is characteristic to Italians already throughout a millennium. They are adhered to topos (villages, a city or quarter) the symbol of which is the central area (Piazza) and local church with its belltower (campanile). Such feeling of an accessory and identity has arisen thanks to traditional holidays in honour of local Sacred, patrons of a city, and characteristic only for this district celebrating and ceremonies.

As a whole, the basic lines of division pass in such a manner that Italy is divided by them into three parts: Northern (Settentrionale), Central (Centro-Meridionale) and Southern (Meridionale). At the same time, the smaller

division is also possible. Criteria that pass these divisions are numerous enough: these are both historical past and cultural traditions and economic specificity and language distinctions. Each division influence political unity of the country and is a subject of gamble for political parties.

Northern Italy is considered to be related to Spanish, French and Portuguese languages. Many northern dialects are often considered as separate languages. Northern group of the dialects covering the north and the northwest of the country, on the structure and features of historical development concerns to so-called Gallo-Italian (Gallo-Roman) languages, draw strong influence from the French and is characterized by the Celtic influence. The basic groups of dialects are: Piedmont, Lombardian, Emilia-Romanian languages, Ligurian and, conditionally, Venetian which also is included by the majority of researchers in this group [18]. Others allocate the Venetian dialect as standing independently⁷.

North of Italy received the name Padania (on the river Po, separating the country's northern part from the central). This shows a vivid example of formation of identity and growth of requirements of political and economic independence from the centre including language features. However, similar division generates a number of contradictions in construction by Northern League homogenized identity, including the fact that the central areas of Padania in the cultural plan (and especially in respect of dialects) are closer to other Italy, than to northern regions. Borders of Padania pass on “La Spezia - Rimini line” (line “La Spice – Rimini”), sometimes named “Massa-Senigallia Line” (line “Massa – Senigallia”), separating Northern Italy from Central and Southern on the basis of language distinctions.

It is possible to divide the central dialects into four basic groups. The Tuscan group approximately coincides with borders of Tuscan region. To the south are extended Latino-Umbro-Marche group of the dialects occupying northern part of region Latium⁸, including Rome, most part of Umbria and a part of Marche. Sometimes these two dialects are united as the central dialects. Southern dialects which are subdivided into two basic groups: the mid-southern group of dialects occupies all bottom part of peninsula, including areas of the regions of Lazio, Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Basilicata and a part of Puglia. However some provinces of Calabria and Apulia, and also Sicily serve as border for extremely-southern group of dialects.

In particular, linguistic features of Sicily developed throughout centuries under the influence of conquests of the different people, including Greeks, and subsequently the

⁷For example: Lorenzo Renzi, Nuova introduzione alla filologia romana, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1994, p. 176 “I dialetti settentrionali formano un blocco abbastanza compatto con molti tratti comuni che li accostano, oltre che tra loro, qualche volta anche alla parlate cosiddette ladine e alle lingue galloromanze [...] Alcuni fenomeni morfologici innovativi sono pure abbastanza largamente comuni, come la doppia serie pronominale soggetto (non sempre in tutte le persone) [...] Ma più spesso il veneto si distacca dal gruppo, lasciando così da una parte tutti gli altri dialetti, detti gallo-italici.”

⁸Lazio (*lat. Latium*) - region in antique Italy, an ancestral home of modern Romance languages. Its territory is a part now of larger administrative-territorial formation of modern Italy - Lazio.

⁶*Campanile* or the belltower – is a symbol of the given city or district.

Byzantium Empire that has caused long Greek influence and powerful Hellenistic tradition on island. Since the 14th century, after increase of influence of Catholic Church, Greek language has gradually superseded and replaced with the South Italian dialect. However, the lowest estates of Calabria having little education continued to speak on Greek up to the introduction of Italy into the Renaissance epoch. So, in 1368 Petrarca recommended to the student who needed to improve the knowledge in Greek, to live in Calabria in the Greek language environment [8].

As to Sardinia, the long history of this island brought it to the special linguistic variety, which led to the fact that Sardinian language (sardu) can be considered as an Italian dialect only conditionally. According to old Romance philological tradition, Sardinian is most archaic of Romance languages which kept some elements of the Latin. For a long time, the Italian government did not admit Sardinian as a language and only in 1997 the law which protected historical linguistic minority, including and Sardinian language has been passed. It should be also mentioned that Sardinian is spoken by about 1,300,000 people and is thus among the fifteen European minority languages with more than one million speakers [14].

Thus, language is not only one of the aspects interfaced to grammar or lexicon but the important sociopolitical tool interconnected with various problems, facing to community, and influencing the status of people, speaking on it, or all community as a whole. Language gets various characteristics when it is a question of correlation of an individual with a certain ethnic group, with this or that cultural environment, region or a social class, and it acts as the tool of communications and an establishment of interpersonal relations.

Language is the most suitable means for correlation of people with that or other community, and also for integration of native speakers in public work proceeding in it, serves as the tool of identification among people as members of the certain social group characterized by the general history, traditions and culture that brings researchers to ethno-linguistic and political linguistics [5, 7].

IV. RISORGIMENTO AND THE ROLE OF LITERATURE IN THE MODERN LANGUAGE FORMATION

Italy is an example of the great role of literature in the modern language formation process and the creation of the common language space, which at the same time lead to the political unification. Thus, the role of literature can't be overestimated.

The development of Italian literature reached the highest degree in the 14th century when the three contemporaries and friends Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch in their native Florentine dialect created the masterpieces which brought the fame both to them, Italian literature, and their culture.

Their poetical success not only brought Italian literature to its highest level yet but also contributed for their native Tuscan dialect to receive a special prestigious status, becoming the language of literature of that time spreading far

beyond the Tuscan borders what finally suppressed the Roman dialect.

In the end of the 19th century, when the unified Italian state was created, it was the literature version of the Tuscan dialect to be taken as the base for the future Italian language. It was also closely connected with the activity of Alessandro Manzoni, a poet and a patriot who struggled for Risorgimento against Austrian domination. He was a protector of the Tuscan tradition, including the literature tradition, and his novel *The Betrothed* became an impact step in the process of forming of the unified Italian language.

Thus we can estimate that literature, especially in its written form, spreading through the centuries is served as the key element which promotes the formation of the united language. On the other hand, the role of political aspect which is interested in the up-rise of this or that language or dialect is also very important. This aspect can be aiming both at the united state formation on the base of the certain language's prestige and at the struggle of the state for its independence.

V. CONCLUSION

Italian politician Massimo d'Azelio has characterized the problem which the country was facing: "Now, when Italy is created, we should create Italians". Italy throughout its rather short history of statehood passes an exam on its unitary durability. During period II Risorgimento national feelings of the simple people in the majority were weakest and existed primarily among political elite. The simple people were far from ideals of the united state. They had a comprehension of the accessory to native region, a city or even villages that supported the use of local language in everyday life or a dialect with chanting of local traditions and celebrations. They also worship of sacred patrons of the given city or village and though a very careful relation to local culture and language.

M. Huysseune writes that the main reason of weakness of national identity of Italians consists in their relation to the Italian state. Referring to researches of the American political scientists S. Almond and G. Verba, he says that Italians love culture, art and the literature of the country and freely extol its beauty. But they seldom transfer so positive relation to Italy on her political institutes which almost all of them concern negatively [9]. Though the Italian state exists more than a century, the full formation of feeling of the general identity which are based on civil values doesn't exist yet. Major disagreements exist between the developed North and economically backward South.

Characterizing II Risorgimento, M. Huysseune cites A. Gramsci's opinion which interpreted this period as "passive revolution practically deprived of participation of masses". He also quotes the historian R. Romano who traces process of formation of the Italian identity up to the medieval period, coming to opinion, that this identity included unpunished arrogance of ruling class, poorly developed civil relations and the consolidated forms of corruption [9].

During process of association, the state aspires to extend the standard language and to develop a universal cultural basis for the purpose of strengthening the unity of the nation. Italy is an example that the standard language is not always capable to supersede dialects and to promote formation of ethno-cultural and linguistic space, which, in turn, negatively affects stability of political system as a whole and leads to a strong regionalism and centrifugal tendencies as it occurs in the North of Italy. Thus, the central government of the country faces a problem on the further distribution of the Italian language, increase of value of higher education and unification of regional cultural-linguistic features [5-7].

As a conclusion, we should agree with this statement: “There is a difficult and inconsistent process of mixing, interpenetration and an interlacing of cultures in the majority of modern poly-cultural regions that puts forward before teachers a problem of realization in society of the ethno-cultural education providing formation of ethno-cultural competence of students, formation knowledge at young generation and experience of cooperation with people of different nationalities, cultures and religions. To teach people to live together is one of the most important tasks of modern school, and it can be solved on the basis of the concept of ethno-cultural education” [21].

Indeed, according to theoretical views of the Russian geographer and historian L.N. Gumilev, the ethnos is “the groups which arise, work, interact among themselves, and at last, die” [22. P. 214]. We would very much like to hope that the study of native history, culture and a unified national language, will avoid, although in the foreseeable future, such an outcome, not only for the Italy, but also to all countries. At least, we believe that the national education systems according to his strength and capabilities can and must help countries with the decision of this very actual and important problem. Moreover, such efforts must be in present conditions most likely in many aspects supranational.

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