

Italianisms and Italian sounding in the business language: The case of Istanbul linguistic landscape

Antonella ELIA¹

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Abstract

Italian fashion is a reference point of style and elegance all over the world. Tangible linguistic signs of “Italianess” in the Istanbul *Linguistic Landscape* (LL) have been collected and analysed in this paper. LL takes into account the “visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). This research is based on the quantification and linguistic analysis of the linguistic visual signs observed in the target area. “Laleli” district, an area located in the surroundings of Istanbul Üniversitesi, has been specifically explored. The photographic collection has been used as starting point for interviews with local shop owners in order to enrich a visual quantitative approach with a qualitative interpretation. The collection and analysis of Italian signs in Istanbul LL aims to demonstrate the vitality of the “Italianess” and the effectiveness of *Italian Sounding* often adopted as a winning marketing strategy in Turkey. Furthermore, this investigation serves as a powerful reminder of the attractiveness exercised by Italian products not only in Istanbul LL, but all over the world. *Made in Italy* contributes to Italian economic growth, but also to increase the *Soft Power* of Italy abroad (Nye, 1990). A final reflection highlights to what extent Italians are often not aware of the fame and vitality of their mother tongue abroad. Contrary to what happens in other European countries, Italians often prefer to adopt unnecessary anglicisms mistreating the beauty and the musicality of their language (Testa, 2017).

Keywords: Italian fashion, Italian sounding, linguistic landscape, Istanbul, business language.

Ticaret dilinde İtalyancadan türetilen ve İtalyanca gibi seslendirilen kelimeler: İstanbul’un dilsel manzarası örneği

Öz

İtalyan modası, tüm dünyada stilin ve şıklığın referans noktasıdır. Bu makalede, İstanbul’da görülen “Dilsel Manzara”ya (DM) ilişkin somut dilbilimsel işaretler toplanmış ve analiz edilmiştir. Bir DM, “belirli bir bölgedeki dillerin halka açık ve ticari işaretlerde görünürlüğünü ve göze çarpmasını” dikkate alır (Landry ve Bourhis, 1997). Bu çalışma, hedef bölge olarak özellikle seçilen, İstanbul Üniversitesi’nin de bulunduğu “Laleli” gölgesinde gözlenen dilsel-görsel işaretlerin nicel ve dilbilimsel analizine dayanır. Fotoğraf koleksiyonu, nitel bir yorumlama ile görsel nicel bir yaklaşımı zenginleştirmek amacıyla yerel mağaza sahipleriyle yapılan görüşmelerin başlangıç noktası olarak kullanılmıştır. İstanbul’daki İtalyan işaretlerinin toplanması ve analizi, “İtalyanlığın” canlılığını ve genellikle Türkiye’de bir pazarlama stratejisi olarak benimsenen “İtalyan sesinin” etkinliğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Aynı zamanda bu araştırma, İtalyan ürünlerinin sadece İstanbul’un DM’sinde değil, tüm dünyada uyguladığı çekiciliğin gücüne değinir. *Made in Italy*, İtalya’nın

¹ Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, İstanbul Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Bölümü, İtalyan Dili ve Edebiyatı ABD (İstanbul, Türkiye), antonellaelia@libero.it, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6019-7349 [Makale kayıt tarihi: 30.10.2019- kabul tarihi: 20.03.2020; DOI: 10.29000/rumelide.706154]

ekonomik büyümesine katkıda bulunup aynı zamanda İtalya'nın yurtdışındaki "yumuşak gücünü" de artırır (Nye, 1990). Son bir düşünce olarak İtalyanların çoğu zaman anadillerinin yurtdışındaki şöhretinin ve canlılığının farkında olmadığını altı çizilir. Diğer Avrupa vatandaşlarının aksine, İtalyan vatandaşları genellikle dillerinin güzelliğini ve müzikalitesini bozan gereksiz bir şekilde İngilizceden alıntılanan sözcükleri benimsemeyi tercih eder (Testa, 2017).

Anahtar kelimeler: İtalyan modası, İtalyan sesleri, dilsel manzara, İstanbul, ticaret dili.

1. Italian fashion: A brief overview

Creativity and originality, good textiles and quality of craftsmanship are the main reasons of Made in Italy success. The '50s and '60s gave birth to a stylish, seductive Italian iconography with Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn's Vespa rides in "Roman Holiday" movie and with the dazzling "Trevi Fountain" scene in Fellini's "La Dolce Vita". Ever since "Italy" and "Glamour" have become synonymous. Nevertheless, Italian glamour is not only a nostalgic myth as it still persists today.

Italian fashion continues to be still renowned for its incredible attention to details, whether leather bags, ladies' cashmere sweaters or silk dresses are manufactured. Italy is nowadays one of the leading countries in fashion design. Fashion has always been an important part of the country's cultural life and society and Italians are well known because they pay a lot of attention to dressing-up well. In the last two centuries Paris has acted as the centre of the fashion industry, as the capital of the global fashion. Since the 1950, thanks to *Giovanni Battista Giorgini*, the Florentine "Italian school" started to compete with the French haute couture, and today labels such as Roberto Cavalli, Valentino, Moschino, Fendi, Versace, Missoni, Giorgio Armani, Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci, Prada, just to quote the most important ones, are very well known all over the world. Nowadays Milan is considered with Paris, London and New York, one of the top fashion capitals of the world.

Italian fashion is connected to the concept of *Made in Italy*, a sort of merchandise brand expressing the high quality of textiles, excellence of creativity and craftsmanship, a global point of reference for international elegance. According to a survey conducted by *KPMG Advisory*², the *Made in Italy* brand, after *Coca-Cola* and *Visa*, is the third best-known brand in the world. Between 2006 and 2010, online searches, which use this keyword, grew by 153%. The qualitative excellence of Italian brands and aesthetics, with the sophistication of national products, represents the main competitive advantage factor of Italian exports.

As the Italian Chamber of Commerce states, most of the goods that Turkey imports from Italy are represented by *Made in Italy* products. As this paper will try to demonstrate, Italy is much more than just a business partner, since Italian fashion is considered a cultural model of reference, an emblem of style and elegance, not only in Turkey, but all over the world.

2. Linguistic Landscape: a definition

Walking through the streets of Istanbul, numerous Italianisms can be noticed in the signs of clothing stores. It is personally believed that the pervasive presence of "Italianess" is the demonstration of the language vitality and persuasive power exercised by *Made in Italy* (Elia, 2019).

² KPMG Advisory, "Il valore del Brand Made in Italy", <http://associazionefive.blogspot.com/2012/10/il-valore-del-brand-made-in-italy.html>

It is not a coincidence, that the XVIth edition (2016) of the “Settimana della Lingua Italiana nel mondo” (The Week of the Italian Language in the World)³ chose as its title: “L’italiano e la Creatività: Marchi e Costumi, Moda e Design” (Italian and Creativity: Brands, Clothing, Fashion and Design).

Cities, due to increasingly frequent migratory phenomena, have become melting pots of languages and cultures, spaces in which the linguistic heterogeneity is exponentially growing. The definition *Linguistic Landscape* represents a trace of the presence, vitality and coexistence of different languages and cultures in the symbolic construction of the “urban public space” (Backhaus, 2007).

The study of *Linguistic Landscape* (LL) is a relatively new field of research where several studies and investigations have been conducted. LL draws from several academic disciplines such as Applied Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Anthropology, Sociology and Psychology (Shohamy *et al.*, 2010). The study of language on signs in public spaces, although it is a new field of research in Sociolinguistics, has been developing since 1997 at a very high speed and, since then, it has been used in numerous scientific papers across the globe. The term LL was first used by Landry & Bourhis, in a paper published in 1997, where LL was defined as:

“The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combine to form the *Linguistic Landscape* of a given territory, region or urban agglomeration”.

Nevertheless, the study of public signs goes back further in history. According to Backhaus (2007) the pioneering works on some aspects of the LL had been published in the ‘70s (Masai, 1972; Rosenbaum *et al.*, 1977; Tulp, 1978). In multilingual and multicultural communities people and passers-by are surrounded by a multitude of languages and language contact phenomena (such as code-switching, code-mixing and borrowing) as well as visual imagery which appear in public places (Pütz-Mundt, 2019). Nowadays we can say that language is everywhere, it is used in shop signs, products in the supermarket, the names of buildings, menus, graffiti, airports, public transport, shopping centres, notices, advertising posters, etc. It has been, therefore, particularly appropriate the introduction of the concept of LL as an “environmental print” (Huebner, 2006) or the perspective of “cities as texts” (Dagenais *et al.*, 2009).

Most studies of the LL are socio-economic in nature, i.e. they seek to find correlations between the use of certain languages in parts of a city and compare them to the general standard of living in those areas. Papers have reported on language on public and commercial signs in various multilingual spaces: Jerusalem (Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006), Lira in Uganda (Reh, 2004), Bangkok (Huebner, 2006), Tokio (Backhaus, 2007), the Bask Country, Friesland (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006), etc.

According to Ben-Rafael *et al.* (2006) a LL can be classified in two categories of language in use, “top-down” (public signs created by the state and local government bodies) and “bottom-up” (signs created by shop owners, private businesses, etc.). These two categories are summarised in the table below:

³ “La Settimana della lingua Italiana del Mondo” (The Week of the Italian language in the world) is an event organized by the cultural and diplomatic network of the Farnesina every year, in the third week of October, around a theme which will be a *fil rouge* for conferences, exhibitions, shows and meetings with famous writers. The event is organized by the “Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation” and “Accademia della Crusca” and, abroad, by Italian Cultural Institutes, Italian Consulates and Universities, under the high Patronage of the President of the Italian Republic. The initiative which is achieving an increasing success, shows a very high number of participants every year.

Categories	Type of Items
TOP-DOWN	Public institutions: religious, governmental, cultural, educational and medical
	Public signs of general interest
	Public announcements
	Signs of street names
BOTTOM-UP	Shop signs: e.g. clothing, food, jewellery
	Private business signs: offices, factories, agencies
	Private announcements: "wanted" ads, sale or rentals of flats or cars

Tab. 1 Ben-Rafael *et al.* (2006)

The fragmentation resulting from the loss of unity and linguistic cohesion of the original social space can be caused by several factors, immigration is certainly the main reason. However, it can also derive from other causes, such as the fascination and the persuasive power exerted by a foreign culture and all that it evokes in the collective imagination. *LL* therefore represents a valuable tool because it reveals crucial data on the linguistic vitality of a locality (Bagna & Barni 2007). Recently, *LL* has also been used as a resource for foreign language teaching, opening up new and original applications in language teaching (Carbonara & Pagliara, 2014).

3. Italian Sounding

According to *World Atlas*⁴, under the constitution of Turkey (Article 42), the Turkish language is established as the official language of the nation. Although more than 30 ethnic languages exist in Turkey, only a small number of people speak some of them. Thus, Turkish is also the most spoken language in the country. Chepkemoui (2017) states in the *World Atlas* website:

With the dominance of the Turkish language, other languages are regarded as minority languages. Turkey is an ethnically diverse country with different ethnic languages spoken in the country. The common ethnic languages spoken in Turkey are Turkish, Kurmanji, Arabic and Zazaki. Other ethnic languages have very few speakers including Turkish dialects, Balkan, Laz, Armenian and Circassian languages. Turkish is the most widely spoken ethnic language with more than 70% of users. The use of Turkish as the official language and educational language has contributed to its wide growth. The widespread use of Turkish language has negatively affected other ethnic languages by reducing their active use in daily interactions. [...] Interactions with the western world and foreigners have led to the development of foreign languages in Turkey. English, German, and French are the common foreign languages used in Turkey. English has a wider coverage among foreign languages. The languages are taught in Turkish schools as elective courses along with other foreign languages like Italian.

Thus, although Italian is considered a minor foreign language in Turkey, what is the reason behind this extensive use of Italianisms? The Italian international fame in several economic sectors is the main reason behind *Italian Sounding*, which consists of giving products' names, slogans, pictures and colors typically associated to the *Bel Paese* (Cembalo, 2008).

Italian Sounding is mainly and broadly used in the marketing of food and beverages produced worldwide, but not exclusively, as many other commercial products have got Italian names. In a nutshell, *Italian Sounding* consists in a widespread counterfeiting phenomenon that leads to the use of images,

⁴ *Worldatlas* <https://www.worldatlas.com/>

logos and words that makes the mind recall Italian products, although they are not (Cembalo *et al.*, 2008).

Italian Sounding products have no connection to Italian items. They have been made to look and sound and recall the memory of Italian products. Consequently, they do not have the same *Made in Italy* excellence and any link to Italian tradition and culture. This widespread phenomenon damages both the perception of *Made in Italy*, as well as the whole Italian economy. The wide development of this phenomenon is due to the fact that there is not yet an international agreement or a legislative resolution. Hence, what is considered illegal in Italy and in Europe, it is not in non-EU countries. Moreover, the increasing appreciation of the *Made in Italy* products by foreigners, generates a growth in demand that is not entirely satisfied by the Italian offer due to its inability to enter the market. This gives space to local companies which exploit Italian fame to increase their profits.

The damage of this widespread phenomenon seriously affects Italian gross national product and it negatively impacts Italian economy and exports. Thus, the implementation of the *Sounding Strategy* constitutes a threat, not only to the Italian export companies, but also to consumers. The use of specific wordings which give the impression that a product is Italian, when it is not, misleads consumers (Francioni & Albanesi, 2017).

The *Italian Sounding* phenomenon is based on the sounding strategy which implies, as key points, low prices and Italian graphic elements which mislead consumers (Dona, 2009). This phenomenon can be described as a way of counterfeiting products since it consists in giving Italian features to products that are not Italian (Cembalo *et al.*, 2008).

According to Canali (2013) different imitation categories can be identified: one category is related to markings which induce the idea of Italy, such as the Italian tricolor, pictures of famous monuments and locations; the second one concerns the use of Italian names and surnames addressed to both products and brands, aiming to recall the Italian country (Canali, 2013). The above-mentioned abusive practices, which are unfortunately largely adopted in Turkey, damage the reputation of original Italian products and mislead consumers.

Interestingly, some authors suggest that companies located in countries that do not benefit from a positive country image, can take advantage of the positive perception associated to another nation (Zeugner-Roth *et al.*, 2008). This is the reason behind the use of foreign branding and the choice of *Italian Sounding* names. According to Atkins (2015), as *Italian Sounding* leads to a loss of sales of authentic Italian products and a decrease in export, Italy is trying to identify effective measures to counteract this extensive phenomenon. In the 21st century *Italian Sounding* is a tangled issue, especially because nowadays global sourcing is a common practice: supply chains are frequently spread across countries, thus, it can be more complicated than before to determine and track the real “country of origin” of a product.

4. An analysis of Istanbul Linguistic Landscape

The presence of Italian shop signs in Istanbul urban *LL* has been explored in this paper. Its purpose is to verify the reasons behind the adoption of Italianisms for commercial activities and brands. The shop signs collected have been examined along different dimensions such as: their function (what purpose does the sign serve?), the message (What does the sign say and why Italian names have been chosen?),

agency (who placed the sign?) and language (is there one or are there several languages on the sign, what is the order of appearance?).

4.1 Research questions

The three research questions which have been specifically identified in this investigation are:

- “Why shop owners choose Italian names for their shops and brands?”
- “Why consumers are so motivated to buy *Italian Sounding* products?”
- “Why consumers prefer goods with Italian names and not similar ones that don't explicitly display Italian features?”

Briefly, the questions guiding this investigation, want to understand why the marketing strategy based on *Italian Sounding* is so attractive and effective for business. Furthermore, it tries also to identify how the sounding strategy affects the market and if consumers are aware of it.

4.2 Methodology

The attention to Italian linguistic signs on the territory of Istanbul has been specifically focused on clothes, jewelry and accessories' sign board shops. Most of the sign board shops (70%) have been selected in the area surrounding Istanbul Üniversitesi, the area of the old city bordering Laleli (which is a suburb with high density activities in the textile sector). The remaining shop signs (20%) have been selected walking through the streets of Istanbul. To better understand the *Italian Sounding* phenomenon in the Turkish market, interviews to shop owners have been carried out.

4.3 Data Collection

In order to document Istanbul *Linguistic Landscape*, 300 photos of shop sign boards have been collected. In accordance with what Ben-Rafael *et al.* (2006) claimed, the results of the research which have been presented in this paper, belong to the “bottom-up language usages” category, as the collection is exclusively based on shop signs.

Turkish students of the Italian department of the 3rd year, who were attending the course of “Italian for Fashion” in the 2017-18 academic year at Istanbul Üniversitesi, have been involved in data collection and in their classification. They took pictures of shop sign boards in the first phase and interviewed shopkeepers in the second phase. Students' involvement was aimed at raising their awareness on the cultural relevance of Italianess in the Turkish economy.

Students were divided into 7 working groups, set on a voluntary basis, composed by 4-5 students. The groups investigated the area surrounding the University for 2 months (March-April 2017), in their extra-academic time. They took pictures of shop sign boards in order to document the presence of Italianisms. To understand the reasons behind the choice of Italian names for shops and brands, 50 oral recorded interviews to shop owners were conducted. Open questions were asked in order to collect both, quantitative and qualitative data.

4.4 Location: Laleli district

The district of Laleli hosts around 7000 businesses and every street is lined with shops: from accessories to women's fashion and children's clothing, sport products, leather accessories and so on. This commercial area is not far from the "Grand Bazaar" one of the largest and oldest covered markets in the world. Laleli district is a sort of small state, economically important at a national level, specialized in the sale of clothing and footwear. This is a very lively area, full of cafes, restaurants and hotels. Although there are several retail stores, most of them are wholesale specialized. The low prices of this commercial area attract both domestic and foreign buyers and wholesalers coming from Europe, Russia and Eastern countries (especially from Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria), as well as from other areas of the Turkish Republic.

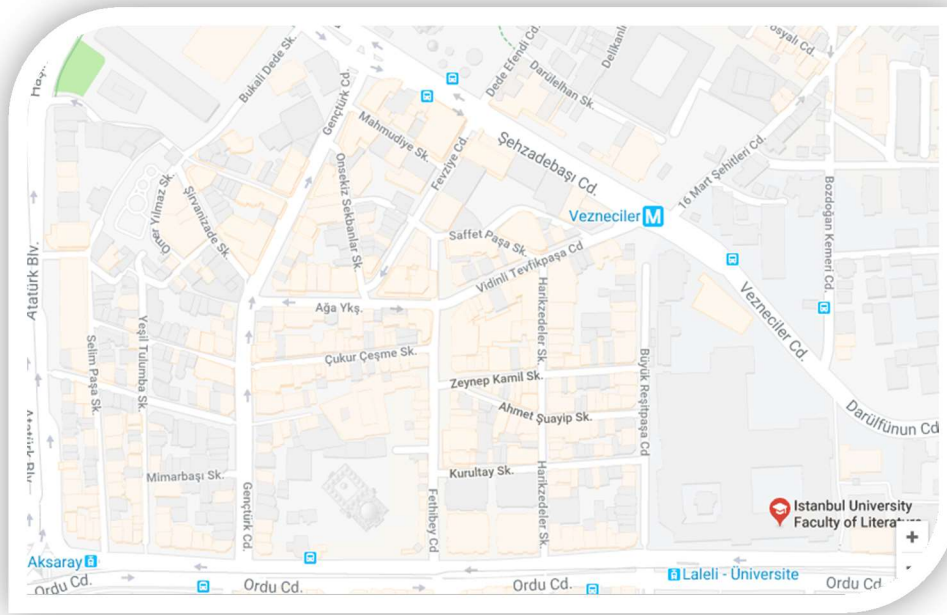


Fig.1 Laleli district

There are many clothing shops in this district which, although use Italian or pseudo-Italian names, have nothing to do with Italy. Shop owners are 100% of Turkish nationality and do not have any Italian ancestors in their family tree which can justify the choice of an Italian name, as it was initially supposed.

In Turkey, the phenomenon of *Italian Sounding* is very widespread. Shops, which have chosen Italian names or with *Italian Sounding* names, have reached their own credibility. Thus, it is not difficult to see them appearing also in prêt-à-porter fashion shows and in more elegant and commercial areas such as Beyoğlu or Nişantaşı, which are very elegant and renowned commercial districts in Istanbul.

The observation has been mainly focused on Laleli district for several reasons. First of all, because this is the area where most of the Italianisms have been noticed. Secondly, because Istanbul Üniversitesi is located in this neighborhood. Thanks to this proximity, it has been easier for students to reconcile project activities with academic commitments.

4.5 Photographic Collection

As above mentioned, during the exploration of Istanbul urban territory, 300 pictures of shop signs with Italianisms and Italian names have been collected in the 2017-18 academic year. According to their common features, shop sign boards have been classified into the following categories based on the criteria listed below:

a. Shop sign boards and hotels with names of Italian cities or famous buildings. Just to mention some of them: “Parma”, “Genova”, “Milano”, “Garda” (lake), “Bagnoli”, “Vicenza”, “Monza”, etc. Other shop sign boards refer to famous Italian historical buildings such as “Bargello” (an historic buildings of Florence), La Scala (the most famous theatre in Milan), etc.

b. Shop sign boards with names of Italian celebrities: “Verdi” (Giuseppe Verdi, 19th century Italian composer of many operas, such as “La Traviata”, “Aida”, “Rigoletto”, etc.), “Raffaello” (a famous Renaissance Italian painter and architect), “Dalida” (renowned Italian singer and actress) “Giovane Lorenzo” (maybe it refers to the famous Italian singer “Lorenzo Giovanotti”); Mirabella (talk show host), “Briatore” (a famous Italian businessman). Shop sign boards dedicated to football personalities are also numerous, such as “Baggi” (for Baggio, a famous Italian soccer player), Zenga (a well-known retired Italian footballer), Fabio Copello (for Fabio Capello, an Italian professional football manager and player).

c. Shop sign boards with positively connotated Italian adjectives or nouns; such as “Avvenente” (charming), “Grande” (big), “Grandezza” (grandeur), “Campione” (champion), “Dio” (God), “Fabiani” (for Fabiano, an amazingly attractive male who is irresistible to all females and is good at everything), “Giovane Gentile”, (a gentle and young person), “Élite” (a select group that is superior in terms of ability or qualities), Fortuna (luck), Fiore d’oro (Gold Flower), Magari (I wish), La Madre (mother), Centro (midpoint), Mete (final destinations), Forza (power), Ricchezza (richness), Solido (strong), Sempre (always), etc.

d. Shop sign boards with counterfeits of famous fashion personalities. Many shops signs are obvious distortions and bizarre elaborations or counterfeits of prestigious Italian clothing brands such as for example: “Roberto Bossi” (for Ugo Boss), “Daniel Cavallini” and “Carlo Cavallo” (for Cavalli) “Donatella” (for Donatella Versace), “Dolce Carina” or “Cabani”, or “Carlo Dolci” (for Dolce & Gabbana), “Franco Ferretti” (for Gianfranco Ferré), “Enrico Cerini” (for Enrico Coveri), “Gabrielli” (for Nazareno Gabrielli) “Mucci” (for Gucci), “Venturi” (for the stylist Giammarco Venturi), “Gizia” (for Krizia).

e. Shop sign boards with an “Italian name” or “Surname” or “Name + Surname”. This represents the most popular category. Having an Italian identity is perceived as a guarantee of reliability. Among shop sign boards with female names have been found: “Renata”, “Sandra”, “Mia”, “Flora”, “Esmeralda”, “Venera”, “Claudia”, “Flaminia”, “Nicoletta”, etc. Sign boards with male names are also numerous, for instance: “Carmine”, “Geppetto”, “Nando”, “Gianni”, “Bernardo”, “Mimino”. The use of “name + surname” is also very spread, for example: “Piro Brano”, “Marco Menti”, “Daniel Lazzaro”, “Nino Pacoli”, “Roberto Ricco”, “Emilio Saggezza” and so on. “Pier” and “Piero” are the most abused proper names, probably because they recall and italianize the name of the French stylist “Pierre Cardin”.

f. Shop sign boards with grammar mistakes are also plentiful. “La fiore” (for “Il fiore” as it is a masculine noun), “Moda Italiano” (for “Moda Italiana”, Italian Fashion), “Sempatica” (for “Simpatica”, nice), “Vero

moda” (for “Vera moda”, real fashion), “Ricardo” (for Riccardo), “Mano Mancino” (for “Mano mancina”, Left hand). Culturally incorrect is the use of “Cremeria” (Delicatessen) and “Gusto” (Taste) names more suitable for food and not for clothing stores. Also “Sassofono” (Saxophone) should be a sign board more appropriate for a musical instrument and not a clothing store.

g. The last category gathers sign boards which mix Italian with English or French words. They are very common in Istanbul LL, for instance: “Marco Star”, “Mucci Leather”, “Sola Store”, “Sandra Shoes”, “Zeropoint”, “Xpunto”, “Zuviano Haute Cuture”, “Roma Gold & Diamond”, “Poggino Classic”, “Pierluigi Sock”, “Lebeni Leather & Fur”, “Bianco Jeans”, “Mucci Leather”, “Pelle Club”, etc.

4.6 Interview Analysis

After having photographically documented the pervasive presence in Istanbul LL of shop sign boards with Italianisms or pseudo-Italianisms, the focus passed on the next phase. It consisted in interviewing store owners in order to understand the motivation behind the choice of Italian names for their business or brands.

A simple question was asked to the 50 traders who were interviewed: “Why did you choose an Italian name?” 70% of traders claimed that a Turkish name was not chosen since, being most of their customers foreigners, a Turkish name would have been hard to remember and understand. The choice of an Italian name (not English or French), has been considered by 80% of the respondents obvious because Italy has been recognized as the homeland of the international fashion. 70% of traders have claimed that according to their experience, if customers had to choose between a product with Italian or Turkish name the choice would certainly fall on the Italian one. Therefore, the choice arises from economic reasons, but not exclusively. 20 % of respondents affirmed that the choice of Italian names is also due to purely aesthetic motivations. Thus, the musicality of Italian language and its unconscious power of attraction is very appreciated by local traders. Unfortunately, they often do not realize the “non sense” of some linguistic choices, as in the case of “Fine Fratelli” for example, where the use of these two words together does not make any sense in Italian. Italian names of shops and brands are registered in Turkey at the local Chamber of Commerce (*Istanbul Ticaret Odası*). Thus, according to 18% of the interviewed traders when a name they want to choose has been already taken, the second choice falls on a similar noun, without worrying about its meaningless but only giving priority to the sounding effect.

The interviews were conducted in Turkish by the students. Analyzing the content of the 50 interviews collected, some common denominators have been noted. In conclusion, shop owners decided to give to their shops Italian names mainly for the following three reasons:

a. Consumers buy pseudo-Italian products because they perceive Italian brands as products of high quality.

Consumers buy pseudo-Italian clothes because they associate them to high quality products. This idea presumes that quality is inferred from the brand and that consumers perceive Italian brands to be more qualitative, a guarantee, a “sign of quality”.

b. The perception of Italian brands as high quality products generates the consumers’ willingness to pay a higher price for pseudo-Italian products.

The perception of Italian products as being of high quality, motivates consumers to pay a higher price for them in comparison to products that are not Italian. Consumers are often incapable to distinguish authentic from not authentic items. For this reason they are not aware that they are not buying original Italian products.

c. As consumers are not able to distinguish authentic from not authentic Italian products, they are willing to pay a higher price for *Italian Sounding* brands thus, traders' earning increase.

If consumers are not able to distinguish between authentic and not authentic products, they will consider the latter as being Italian; so they will pay same amount of money as if the products were originally *Made in Italy* and this means that sellers' profits will be higher.



Fig. 2.a



Fig. 2.b



Fig. 2.c



Fig. 2.d



Fig. 2.e



Fig. 2.f



Fig. 2.g



Fig. 2.h



Fig. 2.i



Fig. 2.l



Fig. 2.m



Fig. 2.n



Fig. 2.o



Fig. 2.p



Fig. 2.q



Fig. 2.r



Fig. 2.s



Fig. 2.t

Fig. 2. (a-t) Italian sign boards in Istanbul LL

5. Conclusion

The quantitative and qualitative investigation on the motivations that induce shop owners to choose Italian names for their stores and brands, demonstrates that the adoption of Italianisms is a winning and effective marketing strategy. The choice of Italian names for shops and brands seems to be a rewarding marketing strategy in Turkey. Italy is considered the country of fashion by the respondents. It seems that if you have an Italian name “Fai una bella figura” (you make good impression) and you sell more. This is the reason why clothing stores with Italian names, which have nothing to do with Italy or *Made in Italy* proliferate so much, especially in the area of wholesale clothing sales directed at foreign customers.

In the nineties, Joseph Nye (1990) an American political scientist, coined the term *Soft Power*. He used this term to define the ability to attract and shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction. This persuasive approach typically involves the use of economic or cultural influence. A feature of *Soft Power* is that it is non-coercive, but determined by a culture which has dominant and influential values.

The answers of the respondents lead us to the conclusion that *Made in Italy* exerts a strong *Soft Power* in Turkey. This conclusion has been widely witnessed and endorsed by the pervasive presence of Italianisms in Istanbul LL. The *Italian Sounding* phenomenon observed in Turkey, shows to what extent, also in a century of rapid transformation, collective imagination continues to associate Italy and Italianess with the tradition of quality and excellence. According to Altagamma ⁵, *Made in Italy* is perceived as a synonym of quality with a double value of *Made in France*. It seems that Italianess evokes not only products of quality in the collective imagination, but also a lifestyle associated with beauty and hedonism. Abroad they say “Live like an Italian” to indicate the freedom to gratify and perceive with all the senses the details that make life beautiful.

⁵ “ALTAGAMMA is an Italian luxury brand foundation composed of companies in the fields of design, fashion, food, jewellery, automobiles, and hospitality, <https://altagamma.it/>.”

The scenario of language choices is poles apart in Italy. Differently from what happens abroad, Italians mistreat the language of the *Bel Paese* at home, they are more and more xenophilius, although the number of people studying Italian in the world continues to grow. Although Italian language retains its influence and reputation and continues to be a vector of economic development even in the new millennium, English words creep into Italian language more and more. The extensive use of anglicisms, especially in the business language, makes Italian equivalents obsolete and unusable (Caniato, 2019). Anglicisms penetrate not only in the business language but also in the institutional and legal language. Furthermore, their use is also amplified by the media.

From 2000 onwards most of the neologisms came from English. The use of anglicisms has more than doubled in the last 30 years. Their frequency has grown exponentially and their adoption is deeply penetrating in common language (Testa 2015, 2017). It is not a matter of purism. It is only personally believed that if unnecessary abuse of foreign words were avoided, the authenticity of each language could be preserved. Therefore, referring to the specific case object of this paper, it is believed that protecting both the Italian language and the excellence of *Made in Italy*, this will produce positive effects in preserving the integrity of the country's whole cultural heritage.

“Words” and “Power” have a strong bond also for the community. The “Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs” reminds that foreigners judge the Italian language as very attractive, making it the fourth most studied language in the world. It is an extraordinary tool of *Soft Power*, it influences the interlocutors, arousing their consent through seduction and desirability. It is a kind of influence that Italy exerts even without being a great economic power. As Zoppetti (2017) claims, protecting and promoting Italian language, already so desirable and seductive, can help the country to strengthen its prestige all over the world. Promoting the Italian language, using it for brands, product names and stemming *Italian Sounding* can also help companies of the *Bel Paese* to protect exports, counteracting the phenomenon of counterfeit products or those who pretend to be Italian using shop sign boards and brand names which “sound” Italian.

Nowadays it is a common and shared idea that “language and culture” are closely intertwined and connected. Every language conveys the identity, history, and values of a nation. The phrase, “language is culture and culture is language” (Krober, 1952), is often mentioned when language and culture are discussed.

Traditionally, languages and cultures have been invented and nurtured mainly through contacts with others. They have been stimulated and shaped primarily by translocal interaction, comparison, and trends. The opening of national borders to trade and investment has increased the hybridization process (Hickey, 2013). The studies of “Contact Linguistics” has extensively demonstrated to what extend languages influence each other when speakers of different languages interact closely. Mixed cultures and identities arise especially in world cities where immigrants and local populations must adjust to each other (Matra, 2009). However, the invasive phenomenon of globalization is, at the same time, counterbalanced by the bursting impact of the opposite trend, which tends to preserve and protect the authenticity of local languages and cultures, giving life to the phenomenon of “glocalization”. Thus, as Robertson (2018) claims, this conjunctive existence renders localization imperative.

To conclude, it is personally believed that Italian language represents a cultural heritage which citizens of the Peninsula should protect. It is not a question of nationalism or purism. While recognizing the positive value of hybridization, it is also crucial to be aware of the negative impact which an uncontrolled

globalization can produce. The protection of one's linguistic and cultural authenticity is a boomerang which can produce beneficial effects also on the development of the national economy. Therefore, it is hoped that, not only Italy, but every country, in an increasingly global and interconnected world, can also be legally protected in safeguarding the originality and authenticity of their language and culture.

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