ELISA PELLEGRINO
LUISA SALVATI
ANNA DE MEO
Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale, Napoli, Italy
pellegrino.elisa@tin.it
luisa.salvati@gmail.com
ademeo@unior.it

Racism and Immigration in Social Advertising

Introduction

The human and organizational problems related to the growing immigration phenomenon in Italy in the early '90s marked the launch of advertising campaigns on the issues of racism, immigration and refugees. Social communication campaigns aimed at encouraging citizens awareness of very important social questions and supporting social cohesion (Gadotti 2001, 2005) started to be used by NGOs (Non Governmental Organization), government and private bodies to promote xenophile and collaborative behaviour among Italians towards foreigners.

In this study a descriptive-comparative research of print, television and radio advertising campaigns on issues of racism and immigration, launched both by government and NGOs from 1990 to nowadays is carried out.

The purpose of the present study is twofold. On the one hand, the objective is to verify whether there are detectable diamesic linguistic and extra-linguistic differences in the transmission of the message within the same campaign, addressed to the same receivers and supported by the same advertising institution. On the other hand, the objective is to infer whether the political context (left wing/ right wing) and the kind of advertising agency (ONG or governmental) influence the representation of foreigners, the kind of relationship (symmetrical or asymmetrical) between Italians and foreigners and the social roles assigned to them in the social communications.

Materials and methods

The corpus of social communication campaigns and their materials were drawn from the web gallery of *Fondazione Pubblicità Progresso* and from the web archive of the *Osservatorio delle Campagne di Comunicazione Sociale*. Querying the first database by *Country* ("Italy") and *Topic* ("Racism", "Immigration") and the second by *Topic* ("Society and Rights"), *Keywords* ("Racism" and "Immigration"), *Category* ("Social") and *Language* ("Italian") we identified eleven advertising campaigns, six on integration, racism and intolerance, three for refugees, one aimed at promoting Romania in Italy and one against poverty and social exclusion. In this paper we present the results of the analysis of three radio, television and print campaigns on racism and immigration, the first launched in the early '90s, the second between 2008 and 2009 and the third in 2009.

The first phase of the research focuses on the diamesic changes of each campaign and the effectiveness of choices depending on objectives and receivers. For radio campaigns careful analyses of suprasegmental features of speech are carried out: articulation rate (AR), speech rate (SR), tonal range and fluency. For printed advertising the focus is on the structure of the *body copy*, the use of *visuals* and the characteristics of *headline* and *pay-off* between spoken and written advertising campaign.

The second phase of the study links the communicative variations to the different kinds of clients of the advertising agencies and to the Italian political context.

Analysis

1990-1991 Campaign: Racism

The campaign entitled "No al razzismo. Sì alla tolleranza" (literal translation "No to racism. Yes to tolerance" – equivalent to "Say No to racism. Say Yes to tolerance") by *Fondazione Pubblicità Progresso* dates back to 1990 and 1991, when the Italian government was led by the Christian Democratic Party and during which time the immigration boom was underway.

The campaign consisted of three phases (Spring '90 – Summer '90 – Winter '91). The materials were a radio advertising campaign, a black and white TV advertising campaign, a colour TV advertising campaign, five black and white posters and eleven colour posters.

Print Campaign

In a context flooded by messages of all kinds, the advertising body-copy must strike the reader's attention, be easily memorized and produce a particular behavioural choice as a final effect.

Five posters highlights the absence of colour and the combination of black and white images, strongly emphasizing the lack of warmth, affection and love. The campaign uses two textual versions, one with images, one without. The second version focuses on the black and white contrast, the font size and the spatial location of the body copy. The text is a single justified block, differing clearly from the headline and consisting of two nominal sentences, one affirmative and one negative centred at the top ("No al razzismo. Sì alla tolleranza" – literal translation "No to racism. Yes to tolerance" equivalent to "Say No to racism. Say Yes to tolerance"). The black background with white lettering is made to impact the reader, instead the white background with the black lettering is more conventional. The headline centrally positioned and written on two lines with very large letters immediately strikes the reader, who may choose not to read all the text below.

A second version of the print advertising campaign focuses on the combination of a written text and a provocative image of a black Christ on the Cross gazing the reader, making him/her feel guilty. The poster wants to evoke a series of associations related to the collective imagination of a society still heavily imbued in Catholicism. The image of Christ in Italian popular culture has typically Nordic physical traits. In this campaign, instead, he is transformed into a black man with typical African traits. The headline is placed on top without further explanation.

The third phase of the print campaign introduces colours and its approach is not as disturbing as the previous. The protagonists are all minors. In one poster there is an African child teaching white child how to write. Their eyes are on the notebook and their hands are touching lightly.

In another poster two happy and smiling children are cycling, the white boy is sitting behind and holding on to his black friend. The headline changes from “No al razzismo. Sì alla tolleranza” to “Saranno amici per la pelle” (literal translation “They will be skin-friends” equivalent to “They will be bosom friends”). The previous slogan becomes the pay-off and it is placed near the mark of the advertising agency. The new slogan plays with a very common expression in Italian, "to be skin-friends" which literally means "to be inseparable". The tense is the future and it refers to a world to be built by younger people. The slogan is adjacent to the image of the two boys, one white and one black, embracing each other or are very close to each other. The black boy has a leading role and the text is realized by the alternation of black and white. "They will be friends" is written in black on a white background and overlaps the image, while "Skin" is written in white on a black background and appears as an appendix to the original message. It uses the metaphorical and literal meaning of the term: skin will not be a problem for most young people because they will be friends.

TV campaign

The TV advertising campaign is based on two other ads, one corresponding to the campaign with the Black Christ, the other similar to the print campaign “Saranno amici per la pelle -They will be bosom friends”.

The first TV advertising campaign reutilizes the image of Christ on the Cross and the technique of using black and white. Unlike the posters which focuses on the figure and the eyes of the Christ, the TV campaign emphasizes all the stages of the actual Crucifixion, making the viewer feel as guilty as the executioner. The black Christ is pictured in an isolated place, lying on his back, with his hands and ankles tied to the cross with ropes and fixed with nails. The man, as silent as the Christ in front of his executioners, raises his eyes and directs them to the public-executioner. His disconsolate expression and dismay are intended to blame and induce the public to avoid xenophobic behaviours. The feeling of bewilderment and anxiety of the spectator, the dramatic intensity of the scene is accentuated by the use of black and white image and by some undistinguished overlapping and repetition of multilingual utterances external to the scene. The only clearly understandable speech sequences are "love" and "I am not a racist." Unlike print campaign, but similarly to the radio ad, the slogan is recited at the end, so that it can be easily remembered and imprinted in the listener’s mind. In the radio ad, the listener's attention is directed towards the end of the message, while in the print campaign the attention is directed to the initial part or on the text written in larger fonts. On the contrary, in the TV campaign, the visual and the acoustic channels overlap, the one enhancing the communicative effectiveness of the other. In the final frame of the campaign the public can read and listen to the slogan, written on two lines and pronounced with a silent pause between the first and second nominal sentence. This adds to the fact that the slogan "Sì alla tolleranza” (“Say yes to tolerance") appearing with the mark of the advertising agency, reveals its aspiration both to promote tolerance in a society undergoing deep transformation and to guide the public opinion, indicating which elements to consider (tolerance) and which to refuse (racism).

The second advertising campaign is completely different from the previous. Like the 1991 posters, it uses colours and adopts a more encouraging approach towards the public. The campaign is softened with images of hope, picturing children, youth and adults of all races acknowledging each other in simple and spontaneous gestures (being under the same umbrella in the rain, shaking hands to greet each other) and moments of sharing (playing football in the street, cards at the bar, quitting school, dancing). Cafés, restaurants, streets, schools, discos, concerts become places for people to meet and to coexist peacefully. Both in the pay-off of the print campaign and in the slogan of the TV campaign there is an explicit reference to a world still to be built. In the first case, this message is expressed linguistically by using the future tense “saranno amici per la pelle” ("they will be bosom friends"). In the second one, it is emphasized by the use of the imperative with an exhortative function “Prepariamoci a vivere in una società multirazziale” ("Prepare to live in a multiracial society.”). In both cases, the receivers of the messages appear to be the younger generations, and, indeed, in the print campaign the head-line appears next to the image of the two boys. In the TV campaign, the slogan is recited when two girls, one white and one black, appear under the same multi-coloured umbrella. Both in the print and TV campaigns different social groups establish ordinary symmetrical interactions and none of the two is socially or discursively dominant.

The Radio campaign

The radio campaign is based on a single ad, whose text corresponds exactly to the body-copy of the press campaign in black and white with no pictures. The ad is characterized by the presence of two voices: one male, which reads the text of the campaign, the second one female, which concludes the campaign by providing technical information about the communication campaign, with reference to its targets and its promoter institution. The ad lasts 30 seconds, where the percentage of silence is about 28%. The male voice has an AR of 4.8 syllables per second, so it is very slow, professional, listener-oriented speech. In fact, compared to average conversational speech, with an articulation rate of 5-6 syllables per second (Giannini, 2000), this speech is much closer to the characteristics of *baby talk* or speech addressed to deaf people (4 syllables per second).The analysis of the tonal range also shows the presence of a monotone speech which is quite low compared to a

conversational speech, that is to say 80 Hz compared to 100 Hz (for male voice). The fluency is also very low, with an average value of 7.5 Hz, which confirms our considerations mentioned above. Moreover, the very low value of SR average of 3.4 syllables per second shows the presence of many silent pauses, which don't correspond to syntactic pauses, but they are purely emphatic. The analysis of examined radio speech shows dominance of the speaker rather than the listener, against whom he feels superior. The message is transmitted from top to bottom with a clear didactic purpose: the speaker seems to be addressing to racist listeners or potentially racist ones, so his voice will deliberately be intimidating and cause anxiety. The slogan "No to racism. Yes to tolerance," closes the advertising text, as in the TV ad, but differently the print campaign.

2008-2009 Campaign: Immigration

Integration Project is a print, tv and radio ad campaign about immigrants integration, sponsored by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Welfare. The campaign is divided into two phases, the first one started on 5 October 2008, the second one on 3 October 2009 and funded by the European Fund for Integration of non European countries. In this period, Italy was ruled by a right-wing political coalition which faced the intensification of migration with severe restrictive policies designed to penalize illegal immigration. The official target of this campaign is very noble: "promoting awareness of human rights expressed in the Italian Constitution, of the laws governing immigration, the provisions of protection against discrimination based on ethnic and racial barriers, and the existence of ways for social integration of migrants". Instead, what emerges from the campaign is less noble: the objective is to ensure the social integration of immigrants through work and knowledge of language. However the jobs and language varieties associated to the immigrants are very questionable. The campaign consists of 3 press posters distributed only in 2008, a TV advertising campaign and two radio advertising campaigns broadcast both in 2008 and 2009.

Print campaign

The campaign is addressed to immigrants and focuses on reassuring images of foreign people, smiling and engaged in low-profile jobs Italians are not interested in. Thus, there is a worker, a maid and a pizzachef, whose language knowledge is represented by dialect. The TV and press campaign are very similar in structure, contents and actors who are involved. In fact, in both cases there is a sentence in dialect and the immigrants are not introduced as Italians, but with name of their home country first, followed by the name of the inhabitants of the cities where they live and the years spent there (Patricia / Philippines, Romana for two years, Neapolitan for 3 years). As for the textual part of printed campaign, it consists of a sentence in typical dialect from Milan, Roman and Neapolitan, written in italics, to resemble speech, and some information written in bubbles with a smaller font. The main feature of the campaign is colours. The colours blue and orange, recall serenity and radiance. Can this possibly mean local assimilation and denial of a possible Italian national identity?

TV campaign

The video advertising campaign is characterized by four consecutive sequences, whose main characters are the same three immigrants present in the print advertising campaign and a fourth testimonial, Andrj, Ukrainian, living in Palermo for 1 year. Each scene opens with an immigrant who is working and singing in dialect the most popular song of the city where he works. Aziz, worker from Milan in a road construction, sings “Oh mia bela Madunina”; Patricia, Roman domestic accompanying an elderly woman, sings “La società de' li magnaccioni”; Andrj, a barman in Palermo, sings “Ciuri, Ciuri”; Waseff, Neapolitan pizzachef, sings “Funiculì funicolà”. A voice-over draws attention to the complexity of being integrated in a foreign country, but it also underlines awareness and respect for the law as a tool for a perfect integration into the Italian society. Actually, these ads, officially addressed to foreigners, are difficult to be understood by them, due to both the high speed of the slogan, and the choice of dialects.

Radio campaign

The communication campaign consists of two radio ads that have the same textual structure: an Italian speaker who is communicating with a foreigner and a male voice that provides technical information about the campaign. The diversifying factors consist of the sex of speakers, the content of the advertising text and the home country of foreign speakers.

The first ad is a short conversation where an Italian woman is trying to explain to the foreign worker that he is in Italy to work. It is noticeable that the sentence is in dialect from which Aziz, the foreigner, awkwardly repeats. The ad lasts 30 seconds, of which about 5.4% is silence. The female voice has a AR average of 4.5 syllables per second, which is typical of a hyper-articulated, listener-oriented speech which resembles to the *teacher talk,* because there are some *starters* "then" and *repairs* and "no, no" (Boulima 1999).The speaker is dominating the foreign listener (one-up, one down), who is destined to be fixed into a low social niche, because the object of teaching is not Italian, but dialect. The content of the message is therefore paradoxically antithetical to the aims of the campaign that stands to promote the integration of foreigners. The foreigner is not only a stereotype, but a receiver of a dialectal and socially low subculture. The analysis of the immigrant’s voice confirms this interpretation, since both the AR and SR averages are higher than the values of the Italian voice (respectively 4.8 and 4.6 syllables per second), approaching the values of average conversational speech. This confirms not only the inferior positions of foreigners compared to the native speakers, but also that foreigners have to learn everything at once, because "they are here to work." To confirm this paradox, the third male voice, which gives some information on Aziz and says the slogan title, presents an accelerated and speaker-oriented speech (AR average = 7.2; SR avarage = 7.1).

The considerations expressed for the first ad can be applied on the second one as well, where an Italian male voice teaches a foreigner an expression in Neapolitan dialect: "no one is born already with the knowledge to do

everything" and Wassef, like Aziz, try to imitate.

2009 Campaign race and immigration

The campaign entitled "Do not be afraid" of 2009 was organized by 26 secular and religious organizations. The target is to promote mutual understanding and dialogue, to break down prejudices and stereotypes that often result in discrimination and violence. Thus, creating threatening surroundings for peaceful human society. The campaign consists of a print campaign, a television campaign and a radio one.

Print campaign

The poster is striking for its visuals, which use the image of a smiling child whose features resemble a Southern Italian, or a North-African, or Romanian boy. He comes out of a white net that traps a man and a woman, in a blurred background. The verbal text labels the white net of the image as a "cage" and specifies its nature: prejudices ("Exit cage of prejudices").

TV campaign

The TV advertising campaign takes up and amplifies the image of the net of prejudices in the press campaign. This time four adults are trapped, two Italians (one woman from Northern Italy and a man from Southern Italy), two foreigners, a man and a woman, and a child from Romanian. Similarly to the radio campaign, TV campaign consists of several communicative exchanges in two voices, where participants, with an attitude of both suspicion and fake solidarity with their interlocutor accuse each other. The woman from North stigmatizes the man from South, which in turn blames the Arabic man/woman, who in turn accuses the African man/women. The African woman blames gipsies for the evils of society and, on the same wavelength, there is the woman from Northern Italy, whose look towards the Neapolitans suggests they are similar to gipsies. This would seem to start the vicious circle of stereotypes stopped by the Romanian child who distances himself from all this and with his candour and smile symbolically breaks the chains of intolerance and leaves the cage built by prejudices. The "other", referring either to the foreigner, or to inhabitants from Southern Italy is depersonalized and becomes an extremely generalized representative of ethnic groups (Arabs, Africans, Gipsies, Southern Italians, Romanians) and his identity is rebuilt through the allocation of prejudices and stereotypes. In fact, the Southerners are Mafiosi, all the Arabs are terrorists, the Africans are lazy, Gipsies are thieves. The slogan "Do not be afraid, clear the way to human rights yourself to others, open to rights. Exit the cage of prejudices" promote understanding and dialogue between cultures.

Radio campaign

The radio advertising campaign lasts 60 seconds, where voices perfectly alternate and even music has a significant part, not just as a background but also to cover silences between one interlocutor and another. The total duration of speech is about 74.8%.The voices reciting the text are four, two females and two males. In addition, there is a male voice that says the slogan, and a woman who indicates the website promoting the advertising campaign. In detail, these voices, taking into account gender differences, an average conversational speech, present with AR average around 6.5 syllables per second. This is a talk that reflects normal conversation because the aim is precisely the reproduction of the daily speech where prejudices and clichés often arise. This finding is confirmed by an SR average that is about 5 syllables in all voices. Excluding the woman from Northern Italy who opens and closes the chain of stereotypes, the impression is that there is no dominant voice.

Conclusion

Data from the survey have highlighted that if the communicative channel (print, radio, video) changes there are expected linguistic and extra-linguistic differences in the expression of the advertising message. In addition, most clearly they revealed the strong ideological and political connotation of social communication. The socio and political contexts as well as the institutional or non-profit nature of the advertising institution are influential variables in determining the social status of the foreigners and the type of relationship between them and Italians. In the campaign "Say not to racism. Say yes to tolerance" of the '90s, when the Italian government was led by the Christian Democratic Party, the foreigner was a person to protect. On the one hand, there was a threatening campaign, aimed at teaching Italians tolerance. On the other hand, it uses the image of children as the symbol of hope for a future of peaceful coexistence, a typical New Testament stereotype. In the campaign in favour of integration launched between 2008 and 2009 by a right-wing government, foreigners seemed to be doomed to integrate and interact only with the lowest working sectors in the country. The protagonist of the campaign are in fact a maid, a worker, a pizzachef and a barman. Accordingly, this advertising influences the creation of specific social representations of minority groups, legitimates differences in status between the natives and immigrants and supports the validity of a model of integration/assimilation of immigrants to the host culture, which should lead immigrants to abandon their cultural identity. The campaign "Don't be afraid" tries to distance from this way of thinking. In fact, Italians and foreigners are on the same level. They, in turn, are objects and bearers of stereotypes. Nevertheless, in this campaign there is a probable unintentional discrimination between Italian southerners and northerners. The North is only bearer of prejudices, and never the object of stereotypes.

The advertising initiatives examined in this paper show how social communication is not politically *super partes*, but rather it emphasizes specific ideological values related to the universe of promotion and acceptance.

References

Boulima, J., 1999, *Negotiated interaction in target language classroom discourse*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins.

Fiedler, K., 2007, *Social Communication,* Psychology Press.

Gadotti, G., 2001, *La comunicazione sociale, Soggetti, strumenti, linguaggi*, Milano, Arcipelago Edizioni.

Gadotti, G., 2005, “Gli attori e temi della comunicazione sociale”, in Cucco E., Pagani R., Pasquali M. (a cura di) *Primo rapporto sulla comunicazione sociale in Italia* 2005, RAI-ERI.

Garrone, G. B., 2005, “Il Quadro Normativo”, in Cucco E., Pagani R., Pasquali M. (a cura di) *Primo rapporto sulla comunicazione sociale in Italia* 2005, RAI-ERI.

Giannini, A., 2000, Range di variabilità della velocità di articolazione in italiano, *Associazione Italiana di Acustica* XXVIII Convegno Nazionale, Trani 10-13 giugno.

Pira F., 2005, *Come comunicare il sociale. Strumenti, buone pratiche e nuove professioni,* Milano, Franco Angeli Editore.

Puggelli, F. R., 2003, “La pubblicità non commerciale e le norme sociali”, *Psicologia e Giustizia* 4, 2, luglio-dicembre.

Raimondi, A., 2005, “Il futuro della comunicazione sociale in Italia”, in Cucco E., Pagani R., Pasquali M. (a cura di) *Primo rapporto sulla comunicazione sociale in Italia* 2005, RAI-ERI.

Solito, L., 2002, *Luoghi comuni. Comunicare il servizio sociale*, Liguori, Napoli.

Vedovelli, M. et al., 2004, *Lingue e culture in contatto. L’italiano L2 per gli arabofoni,* Milano, Franco Angeli Editore

Volli, U., 2005, “Falsi amici: testi e strutture nella pubblicità sociale e in quella commerciale”, in Cucco E., Pagani R., Pasquali M. (a cura di) *Primo rapporto sulla comunicazione sociale in Italia*, RAI-ERI.

Dossier Statistico Immigrazione, Caritas-Migrantes, 1990, I Rapporto, Roma, Edizioni Idos.

Dossier Statistico Immigrazione, Caritas-Migrantes,1991, II Rapporto, Roma, Edizioni Idos

Dossier Statistico Immigrazione, Caritas-Migrantes, 2008, XVIII Rapporto, Roma, Edizioni Idos.

Dossier Statistico Immigrazione, Caritas-Migrantes, 2009, XIX Rapporto, Roma, Edizioni Idos.