

Learning Italian Through Television Advertising

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Goals of the Research

- ◆ To create a set of didactic units that explore the pedagogical potential of TV advertising. These units can be utilized as supplementary materials within language, literature, and film courses, as well as core materials for an undergraduate course on the history of Italian media.
- ◆ To provide some suggestions on how to use television advertising in the language classroom in general.

Learning Goals

- ◆ Students should be able to develop media literacy about the specific discourse of TV advertising. They should also be able to access the networks of cultural references that connect TV ads with other discourses, such as cinema, TV shows, music, and literature. Finally, they should be able to critically think about the expectations generated by these networks in relation to their C1 and C2.

Why TV Advertising?

- ❖ **Brevity**. TV ads are “Mini-dramas which compress a large number of narrative elements into a very short space of time making use of highly skilled and stylized acting” (Cook 2001).
- ❖ **Recognizability**. Because of the pervasive presence of advertising, students are familiar with them and know what to expect: the persuasion to buy a specific product or service.
- ❖ **Intertextuality**. Tv advertising is “full of allusions to animated films and implicit quotes from other commercials [...] Different cultural signals intersect with others, thereby acquiring a new value” (Kramsch 1994).
- ❖ **Cultural Specificity and Adaptability**. Ads “representing global brands of non-durable low-interest products reveal [...] higher degree of cultural adaptation” (Hermeking 2006).

Example of Didactic Unit: Two Lesson Plans on The Pasta Barilla TV Ads

- ◆ One brand, Pasta Barilla, two recent TV ad campaigns for different markets: the Italian and the American.
- ◆ Italian market: the message and values of the brand rely on a traditional and reassuring view of the Italian family.
- ◆ American market: the message and values of the brand rely on the idea of the individual's independence and freedom, and associate the consumption of the product with a fantasy of touristic romance in Italy.
- ◆ Comparing and contrasting these two different narratives provide effective ways of stirring discussions in class about a series of possible topics: food and national identity/ national cultures/national stereotypes/ expectations about gender roles.

First day : The Contemporary Italian Family at the Dinner Table

◆ First Day: Pre-Class Activities

- ◆ Read the article entitled “Gli Italiani a Tavola.”

http://notizie.guidaconsumatore.com/004421_italiani-a-tavola-cosa-si-compra-e-cosa-si-mangia/

- ◆ Watch the Barilla TV ad for the Italian market: Lasagne Emiliane Barilla.
- ◆ Re-watch the film clip from *Non Ti muovere* (2004) entitled “A wife lets her husband know she is pregnant” through the BLC Film Library.

Warm Up

- ◆ Chi conosce la *Pasta Barilla*? Chi la compra? Che idee associamo alla relazione tra cibo e famiglia italiana?
- ◆ Cosa impariamo dall'articolo sugli italiani a tavola?

Lasagne Emiliane Barilla - Preview of the Questions

◆ What Type of Ad?

◆ **medium**: television, radio, cinema, press, Internet.

◆ **product or service**: product ads and non-product ads

◆ **technique**: hard sell/soft sell; reason/tickle; long copy/ short copy.

◆ **slogan**:

◆ **the ideal buyer**: nationality, age, gender, class.

Lasagne Emiliane Barilla

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GcEQd7sNGo>



MEDIASET



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Lasagne Emiliane Barilla



Dove c'è Barilla c'è Casa



DOVE C'È BARILLA C'È CASA.


MEDIASET

Comparison: *Non ti Muovere* (2004)

- ◆ Elsa e Timoteo sono felici insieme?
- ◆ Quanti figli vogliono?
- ◆ Cosa manca in questa famiglia rispetto a quella della pubblicità?
- ◆ Qual'è il rapporto tra cibo e identità tradizionale?



Second Day: Selling Italianness in The U.S.

- ◆ Pre-class Activities
- ◆ Read the article “Star e cibo italiano: that’s amore. Hollywood spende cifre folli”
<http://www.italiaatavola.net/articoli.asp?cod=25620>
- ◆ Watch the Barilla TV ad for the American market.
- ◆ Watch the trailers of *Eat Pray Love* and *Roman Holiday*.

Warm Up

- ◆ Chi è stato in Italia? Che idea dell'Italia avevate prima di andare, sulla base dei film, delle canzoni, dei libri che avevate letto sull'Italia?
- ◆ Chi ha visto *Eat Pray Love* al cinema? Che idea ce ne facciamo sulla base del trailer?

Eat Pray Love (2010) - Trailer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cm7E81pVsiM>

Roman Holiday (1953) - Trailer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GzCG6IpFUw>

Preview of Questions on The Barilla Ad for The American Market

- ◆ What Type of Ad?
- ◆ **medium**: television, radio, cinema, press, Internet.
- ◆ **product or service**: product ads and non-product ads
- ◆ **technique**: hard sell/soft sell; reason/tickle; long copy/ short copy.
- ◆ **slogan**:
- ◆ **the ideal buyer**: nationality, age, gender, class.

The Barilla Ad for the U.S.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u44Zb1-OF5k>



Some Suggestions

- ◆ The use of TV ads as authentic materials in the language classroom offers several advantages: brevity, recognizability, intertextuality, and cultural specificity.
- ◆ TV ads can be used in the language classroom at all levels of linguistic competence, from beginning courses to upper-division courses.
- ◆ Always provide background information and cultural context.
- ◆ Include detailed formal analysis of the materials.
- ◆ Activities should focus on intertextuality across media and the cultural specificity of the materials.

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