

MULTILINGUALISM, SYMBOLISM AND ILLUSIONS IN 19th-CENTURY ADVERTISING DISCOURSE: THE CASE OF PULA NEWSPAPERS

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This paper aims to analyse some of the characteristics of 19th-century advertising discourse in the city of Pula in the period from the 1880s until 1918. The main purpose of the analysis is to examine the modes in which the semiotic materials and meanings from the cultural and historical reality were reelaborated and represented in the advertising discourse. As the main Austrian military port, situated on the crossroads between three cultural areas (German, Slavic, Romance), Pula was culturally and linguistically a very heterogeneous city. The analysis will consider advertisements printed in newspapers in German (*Polaer Tagblatt/Morgenblatt*), Italian (*L'Eco di Pola, Il Popolo Istriano, Il Giornaletto di Pola*), and Croatian (*Naša sloga, Hrvatski list*). In 19th-century advertising two relevant phenomena are closely linked to the multilingual context of the city of Pula. The first relates to the attestation of so-called bilingual advertisements, and the second refers to advertising of the very same product in three different languages depending on the language of the newspaper. Two additional semiotic features of the advertising discourse linked to the hallmark of multilingualism will also be analysed: (1) references to local events (city events, different epidemics), (2) the evocation of the global context (the First World War, world congresses, universal exhibitions). It will be argued that multilingualism together with local and global references had an impact on the recognition of advertising discourse as one of the relevant social discourses of the period, and that it influenced the formation of collective identities as well as the construction and distribution of knowledge, insights and experiences.

Keywords: advertising, multilingualism, the 19th century, Pula, semiotics

1. IN LIEU OF AN INTRODUCTION: PULA AS MULTILINGUAL CITY DURING THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN PERIOD

Reflecting on cultural trends in the production of perceived value in her book *Creating Value: The Theory and Practice of Marketing Semiotics* Laura Oswald (2015: 40) notes:

Advertising is by nature a public discourse that draws upon the shared cultural codes of the target market, including the formal and cultural codes structuring the meaning and representation of goods in a given context. This, the social semiotic dimension of advertising, not only transcends the individual ad but also transcends the distinct life experiences, memories, and decoding ability of individual consumers.

The aim of this paper is to show that the local and social contexts of 19th-century Pula encouraged a rise of advertisements as a public discourse *par excellence*, and determine how those contexts functioned as a semiotic resource from which their senders (early 19th-century “copywriters”) drew inspiration for their advertising techniques in this very first period in the European history of advertising. Moreover, it will also be shown that world and European current events, political, cultural and scientific, also provided an impetus to advertising. In this sense, some advertisements are typical examples of these categories.

The semiotic analysis was conducted on the corpus of printed advertisements. Advertisements were collected from daily newspapers published in Istria, mainly in the city of Pula in the period from the late 1880s (when first advertisements begin to appear more frequently in the press) to the years following the First World War and the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The corpus is composed of newspapers published in German (*Polaer Tagblatt/Morgenblatt*), Italian (*L'Eco di Pola, Strenna del periodico Leco di Pola, Il Popolo Istriano, Il Giornaletto di Pola*), and Croatian (*Naša sloga, Hrvatski list*). Therefore, it seemed advisable to examine the local context generating the newspaper advertisements under analysis. In the studied period, the context was characterized by the emergence of a bourgeois public and a bourgeois culture, represented mainly by the Italian and German bourgeois elites, as well as by Croatian and Slovenian populaces with lifestyles of their own.¹

A crucial part was also played by the ever faster demographic changes, the urbanization of the town and its increasing orderliness, by improvements in hygienic conditions and greater care for people's health. Besides, particularly interesting for the subject of the paper are the dynamic social interactions implying multiculturalism and multilingualism. In that sense, we can take the middle classes and the aristocracy to be the primary addressees of advertising. Reading newspapers was something practiced mostly by these two classes. Villagers – in Istria, predominantly Croats – would read newspapers (*Naša sloga*) mostly

¹ Speaking of elites, in this paper the term *elite* does not relate only to prominent social status and its exclusiveness, but primarily to education. The basic premise is that of the German philosopher Max Scheller about the elites playing the central role in shaping the ways we think, perceive, love, hate, in articulating our taste and sense of style, our evaluations and desires (Scheller 1996: 88–89).

on their parish priests' encouragement, for political reasons, in order to shape and reinforce their national consciousness (Šetić 2005: 47), and not so as to get acquainted with the latest goods, scientific breakthroughs, medical or technological achievements. This statement, however, requires some qualification: Saints Cyril and Methodius Society for Istria, approved in 1893 and aiming foremost at collecting funds for establishing Croatian primary schools in Istria (ibid.: 69), made equal use of advertising discourse in its endeavours at developing the national consciousness of Istrian Croats. One of its advertisements, taken from a 1909 issue of the *Omnibus* newspaper, runs as follows:

Sapun Družbe sv. Ćirila i Metoda za Istru. Dužnost je svakog našeg trgovca da drži u svojoj trgovini samo Družbin sapun, a time će bez svoje štete doprinášati probudjenju hrvatske svijesti u Istri. (6th March 1909)

Soap made by Saints Cyril and Methodius Society for Istria. Each shopkeeper of ours is required to carry exclusively our Society's soap in this way, with no damage to themselves, contributing to the awakening of Croatian consciousness in Istria.²

Another advertisement, published in the Croatian newspaper *Naša sloga* directly addressed Croats:

Hrvati, kupujte svi papir za pušenje Družbe sv. Ćirila i Metoda za Istru. (30th April 1903)

Croats, you should all buy Saints Cyril and Methodius Society for Istria rolling paper.

Taking this into consideration, from its very outset, newspaper advertising discourse has functioned as a significant social discourse,³ as a method of diffusing information and knowledge, and as a powerful means of serving various ideologies. As Oswald notices "meaning and force of consumption are woven into the shared values, beliefs, and relationships that structure society" (Oswald 2013: 18), and they are a way to influence the balance of power in the political arena of a period and in its circumstances.

The strong sense of belonging to the Empire and the highly developed bourgeois consciousness were also reinforced by a bureaucratic and administrative system, introduced to Istria by Austria, and regarded as efficient to the present day. It was aimed at the benefit of all its citizens, therefore envisaging activities like social welfare (Dobrić 2003: 57). This certainly fostered a sense of security in all the subjects of the Empire, an impressive description of which can be found at the beginning of Stefan Zweig's biography:

If I try to find a formula aptly expressing the time of the First World War, which saw me growing up, I think this would be the most succinct way to put it: it was the golden age of security. Everything in our almost-one-thousand-year-old monarchy seemed as if made for eternity, while the state itself appeared as the warrantor of that durability. (Zweig 1999: 13)

² All translations of advertisements and quotes are the author's.

³ The concept of social discourse relevant for this research was developed in the frame of Italian and French semiotics, namely by Semprini (1997) and Marrone (2003).

Advertising discourse, in its turn, as it will be shown, gave its own contribution to the making and preserving of that secure world.

In the mid-19th century Pula began to spread and turn into the most important urban centre of the Istrian peninsula, at the same time becoming the main naval port of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the main base of the Imperial and Royal (German: *kaiserlich und königlich*) fleet (Benussi 2002: 542). The enlargement was accompanied by a conspicuous growth in the number of its inhabitants. According to the Istrian historian Bernardo Benussi, whose capital book on Pula was published in 1923, “there was no other town within the Austrian Empire – and it was a great rarity for Europe as a whole – with a population growth rate as rapid as that of Pula: from 1,104 inhabitants in 1850 it soared to 17,777 in the census dated 31 December 1888, not including 7,695 garrison members” (Benussi 2002: 563). In the decades to come the number kept increasing, reaching nearly 60,000 in 1910. The incomers being mainly fit for work, looking for a better life and earnings, the average age was markedly low: 26 years (Benussi 2002: 565).⁴ Intensive migration gave rise to multinationalism and multilingualism, which insured a vigorous cosmopolitan spirit to the town, notable at the level of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a whole.

In this sense, ethnically, culturally, linguistically and religiously, Pula was a very heterogeneous town. Its geographic position at the meeting point of the Slavic, Romance and Germanic cultural areas, as well as the very historical circumstances of the age, made for the presence of various nations: besides the numerically predominant Croats, Italians and Germans, there were Slovenians, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Poles, Romanians. In such circumstances, multilingualism, high population mobility and migrations both from the nearby villages and the most distant regions of the Monarchy were very common. Apart from everyday encounters and everyday unofficial communication among speakers of different languages, multilingualism was also alive at the institutional level: there were Croatian, German and Italian schools, newspapers and magazines came out in all three languages, there were all kinds of national associations – reading, educational, sports, music, labour, etc., just as there were libraries, bookshops, and so on. Also active in the town was the Berlitz Language School, where one could learn English, French, German, Croatian, Italian and Hungarian (Balota 1960: 99), which by no means exhausted all the languages whose teaching was felt to be needed at the time. The Berlitz School regularly advertised its activities and needs in the newspaper *Polaer Morgenblatt/Tagblatt*, as can be seen in example 1 taken from the issue dated 13 November 1905. Thus, in one of its 1905 issues we find an advertisement for a teacher of Japanese. Generally speaking, there were numerous newspaper advertisements promoting foreign language teaching. Contributing to the heterogeneity of the town there were also officers and soldiers coming

⁴ Istrian railway was opened in 1876, which connected Pula to Divača, and thus to the railway network of the whole Empire (Balota 1960: 45; Peruško 1964: 400). This stimulated migration and made it easier. B. Benussi places considerable emphasis on the railway line since it “greatly contributed to the development of Pula, having brought it into direct contact with Vienna and Trieste” (Benussi 2002: 659).

to Pula in the line of duty from all parts of the expansive Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as lots of foreigners residing in the town.⁵

Another point is the literacy rate, quite high for the period in question. According to the 1880 census, Pula had 34.32% of illiterate inhabitants above the age of seven, which was quite low in contemporary terms (the ratio of the illiterate population in the Austrian littoral region was 56.79%), equalling the average rate in the whole Austrian part of the Empire (Dobrić 2003: 42, 57). Still, the data concerning the literacy rate are to be treated with caution since they do not illustrate the literacy rate based on ethnicity and language. Austrian statistics do not refer to the first (mother) tongue, but to the language in use. The three main languages (Croatian, Italian and German) were not of equal prestige, and their usage was not equally spread. For instance, in Pula, Italian was more prestigious than Croatian, so that an immigrant from one of the villages or, for that matter, any person of Croatian origin desiring to ascend the social ladder or get a better job would adopt Italian as their language of public communication (Balota 1960: 80).

208 Filialen The II. Jahrgang

Berlitz School of Languages

Sprachschule für Erwachsene

≈ POLA ≈

Olivo S. Stefano I, II. Stock

**Englisch, französisch, deutsch, italienisch,
kroatisch etc., erteilt von Lehrern in ihrer
respekt. Muttersprache.**

Einzelunterricht und in Klassen (höchstens 8 Personen) von
8 früh bis 10 abends.

Separierte Klassen für Damen, Herren Offiziere und Herren
vom Zivil.

Prospekt gratis

**Einschreibungen für alle Sprachkurse finden
täglich statt.**

Example 1. Advertisement for Berlitz School of Languages; *Polaer Morgenblatt*, 13th November 1905

⁵ Of course, the three most numerous nations were involved in mutual conflicts and tensions of political nature (Balota 1960; Benussi 2002; Dobrić 2003). Moreover, there was a darker side to Pula's everyday life, manifested as poverty, crime, murders, prostitution, violence, extramarital pregnancy, abandoned children etc. (Balota 1960: 83–84).

Moreover, constant efforts were made at spreading literacy, teaching Croatian and ensuring book lending services in order to develop a reading culture at the grass-roots level (Dobrić 2003: 112) and help the inclusion into the bourgeois elites. This was particularly characteristic of the Croatian section of the populace, whose readership was scarce.

The work entitled *Pola, seine Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft*, written by an anonymous author in the late 19th century, divided the inhabitants of Pula into three social groups: the military section (officers, administrators, medical staff and engineers, all of them employed at military institutions and mainly of German origin, along with their families), the middle classes (mainly Italian, partly Croatian, lastly Slovenian, German and Czech), and labourers (mostly Italians and Croats) (op. cit., 37).

All of this made Pula look cosmopolitan. “As the fortification and naval port of the whole Monarchy, as a meeting point of numerous people coming from all parts of the Empire, there is today a cosmopolitan spirit to Pula, in terms of our Empire as a whole.” These are the words of an anonymous author writing in the late 19th century, quoted by Benussi (Benussi 2002: 568). The spirit also came to be felt in the two spheres important for the present paper: newspaper reading culture and advertising. Of course, there was also a downside to the construct of the cosmopolitan spirit, and it was visible in the same spheres: for instance, the newspaper *Il Diritto Croato* was published in Pula and was subsequently supplanted by the *Il Pensiero Slavo*, published in Trieste. In an editorial dated 11 April 1894 the reason is given for moving from Pula to Trieste: the newspaper wants to increase its readership, but Pula is provincial, and the newspaper needed to change its place/town of publication.

A peculiarity of a sort and the most representative evidence of Pula’s multilingualism is undoubtedly to be found in the trilingual newspaper *Omnibus*, published from 1904 to 1912, with a circulation of 2,000 copies and offering parallel texts in Croatian, Italian and German (Bogneri 1986: 73). The Italian *Il Giornale di Pola*, published from 1900 to 1915, had the highest circulation.⁶ *Poaler Tagblatt* was the most important, that is, along with *Briani Insel-Zeitung* (1910–1913) the only German newspaper in Pula. From 1905 to 1906 the *Poaler Tagblatt* appeared under the name of *Poaler Morgenblatt*. Its circulation was 1,500 copies (Bogneri 1986: 77). The most important Croatian newspaper was *Naša sloga*, running at 1,200 copies (Cella 1974: 99).⁷

⁶ The data concerning its circulation are variously reported. According to the data used by Bogneri, there was an average circulation of 5,000 copies. Cella speaks of 6,000, while Dobrić mentions 10,000 copies, without giving the source (Bogneri 1986: 60; Cella 1974: 99; Dobrić 2003: 44).

⁷ The *Il Diritto Croato*, the second important Croatian newspaper, published in Italian, had a circulation of 770 copies (Bogneri 1986: 43).

2. MULTILINGUALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM IN 19th-CENTURY ADVERTISING DISCOURSE

2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ADVERTISING DISCOURSE IN THE 19TH CENTURY – OBJECTIVITY, MODELLING AND ILLUSIONS

Writing about the early days of advertising discourse on the European continent, Landowski describes old-style advertising as communication marked by a strong objectivizing character (Landowski 1999: 170). He makes an analogy with newspapers, understood as a sort of information vehicles, news promoters. By analogy, advertising discourse was meant simply to announce the existence and the inherent characteristics of the advertised and promoted commodity. So, on the one hand, readers were expected to sieve through a mass of information for what suited their personal needs, depending on their specific fields of interest, and activity. On the other hand, it was for the potential customers to filter through the existing deluge of advertisements for the ones offering commodities they judged as having some actual value with regard to their particular “lifestyles” (Landowski 1999: 170). The advertising scheme consisted of “objectively” suggesting and offering commodities and services to potential customers. The latter were seen as determined and responsible subjects, competent in their acts of buying and asking no more than to learn about the existence of a commodity or to be informed of some latest breakthrough or achievement.

Gradually, however, an alternative formula made its appearance as early as the latter half of the 19th century, aiming at some sort of competence transfer. Responsibility in choices regarding individual consumption was now increasingly shifted onto the level of a particular brand, group, firm, institution, etc. One had now only to “surrender” oneself to it, once and for all. *Contract* logic, privileging long-lasting relationships between the supplier of commodities or services and their customers, is being substituted by *purchase* logic. In the first case, subjects remained relatively free to want and choose goods of their own liking, which is why Landowski calls them autonomous subjects. In the second case, a targeted disposition was established, thus fulfilling the conditions leading to the emergence of one’s own “desires”; Landowski calls this type of subject normalized (Landowski 1999: 171). The advertisements examined here are dominated by contract logic, shaping autonomous purchasing subjects.

In terms of space organization, advertisements were most often printed on the last page, frequently including the penultimate one (Example 2, taken from *Il Goinnaletto di Pola*, 1 June 1905). The penultimate page, however, regularly combined them with newspaper articles. Organizing newspaper pages in a way to enable a combination of various types of information and contents suggests that advertisements were included into the circulation of various types of information on an equal footing. Readers were thus encouraged to consider them a relevant source of information, new breakthroughs and achievements. During the examined period, advertisements did function as such a source. Various types of advertisements have been attested. In addition to advertisements in

their present sense, there are public acknowledgements, obituaries, job announcements, advertisements concerning various kinds of services (tailoring, barbering, medical, etc.), property/real estate for sale or rent, animals lost and found, latest book and dictionary releases, invitations to meetings, conventions, etc., timetables (for trains and ships), announcements of theatre and cinema performances, requests for parents to register their newborns, etc. With regard to the space organization of advertisements, another feature should be mentioned, one that reflected what we might call the practical, economical and rational side of advertising. A single advertising frame was sometimes used to advertise two or even more products, thus forming “parallel texts” within an advertising text, texts whose space distribution and formal characteristics could manifest themselves in two ways. First, the advertising space could be horizontally or vertically split into sections of equal size, containing two or more texts. Second, the space could be split into sections of unequal size: one would only hint at the product advertised, while the second was in a way central. The different levels of importance could be indicated by the size of their respective spaces – for instance, the “main” text would take up a section larger than the one taken up by the “lateral” text – or by different formal characteristics – for instance, the title of the “main” text would be more pronounced in its length, size, the type and thickness of its font, there would be other components besides the title, especially body copy, while the “lateral” text was articulated in a simpler way, perhaps even missing a title or the body copy.



Example 2. Il Goirnaletto di Pola, 1st June 1905

Moreover, there were two characteristics of advertisements intimately connected with the multilingual environment and the cosmopolitan spirit of the town. The first was the existence of so-called bilingual advertisements, while the second was advertising one and the same product in three different languages, depending on the newspaper publishing the advertisement. Two further characteristics of “Pula’s advertising discourse” in the late 19th century, taken as relevant in the present paper, had to do with the semantic dimension of advertisements. The first concerned references to the local contexts of Pula and Istria, as well as to the town’s everyday life. The second involved references to the global Austro-Hungarian, European, and even world contexts. When the local and global contexts are discussed, what is meant is not (only) advertising commodities of local origin from Pula (such as tailoring or home clothing shops, local pharmaceutical preparations, bakeries), and promoting the much-vaunted world or at least European brands (Odoł, Isolabella, Kalodont/Sarg, Singer, Berlitz Language School, Krupp, Henkel). Furthermore, what is meant is not (only) advertising commodities or services positively connotated by the word *Wiener* (“Viennese”) such as the frequently advertised *Erste Wiener Luxus-Bäckerei*, *Erster Wiener Friseur-Salon* or *Wiener Varietee*, which, not by chance, appeared quite often in the *Polaer Tagblatt/Morgenblatt*.⁸ Such positive connotations of evoking things “Wiener” certainly had many advertising functions, and here we can highlight integration into the spirit of cosmopolitanism. Advertising discourse created the referential illusion⁹ that in Pula one could purchase and consume, whatever may be purchased and consumed in Vienna itself. Thus, there was also a kind of political function attached to it, one of creating the sense of loyalty to the Empire and to the faith in its certainty, power and stability. To that extent one can approach the sphere of advertising (and, for that matter, all propaganda-like communication) as a relevant field of cultural elaboration, empowered by its nature to finely represent many conceptual models and symbolical configurations of the society producing them. Ferraro points out that no act of communication interaction can be seen as transfer of content from a “loaded sender” to an “empty addressee”, that is, from one who knows to one who does not. Subjects cooperating in an act of communication have to share at least some specific components of the given cultural system. We are therefore dealing with two “loaded” subjects establishing a mutual relationship (Ferraro 1998: 35). Advertising thus assembles values, ideologies and information that are already activated, at least partly, as well as discursive structures already constituted, modes of behaviour and action that are already working. It then connects all of that to the new product, as a part of

⁸ Numerous navy officers and civil servants lived in Pula together with their families. From the Monarchy’s metropolises, whence they mostly moved to Pula, they also brought sophisticated cultural habits, with reading German newspapers and books ranking among the most important ones. This led to an upsurge of German publishing in the late 19th and early 20th century.

⁹ The development of the concept of referential illusion is linked to the names of two famous French linguists and semioticians, Roland Barthes and A. J. Greimas and his Paris School of Semiotics. In Barthes’ work it presupposes that although it is a necessary condition of a sign that the signifier has a referent, this is only “referential illusion” (Barthes 2009; similarly, Michael Riffaterre speaks of “referential fallacy”). Greimas further developed this idea: every semiotic procedure or practice in fact produces “meaning of the effect of reality” which is termed referential illusion in his School (Greimas and Courtés 1993).

or a quotation of an already existing system, recognized and evaluated (ibid.: 36). The new entity being inserted into the system thus ideally appears as the latest *token* of an already familiar and assimilated *type* (ibid.: 36–37). Of course, in this process, one can expect continuous shifts, repeated adaptations, connections among various areas of the cultural universe, making use of the latest phenomena, objects, breakthroughs, achievements. Understandably enough, an advertisement involved in such activity simplifies a complex universe or eliminates, suppresses or ignores some of its parts, depending on the value system it draws on. An advertisement does not resort to all areas of its cultural system, but always limits itself to choosing some of the elements belonging to the imagery, symbolical forms, linguistic registers, narrative and visual configurations. To that extent, Ferraro claims, authors of advertisements do not create out of nothing. Their creations can be seen as re-elaborations of cultural material that aim at building convincing links between the brand and/or the product, on the one hand, and the values and the existing cultural forms, on the other (Ferraro 2003: 179–180).

Istrian advertisements from the late 19th century are thus places of cultural re-elaborations. What is re-elaborated are the existing systems of values, ideologies, knowledge, behaviour, breakthroughs and achievements circulating in a given period and historical-political context through the spheres of culture, language, and production of meaning and sense – the semiosphere (Lotman 2005). In the process, the sign systems constituting it functioned as sources for the authors to draw ideas for their advertisements, on the one hand, while, on the other, they took active part in constructing and shaping the advertising discourse. However, besides the already mentioned characteristics, they can be attributed another, if we elaborate on Ferraro's view of the process of universe/semiosphere simplification involved in the creation of advertisements, and then extend his view by introducing another concept crucial to Lotman's work. In the Tartu School of Semiotics, which included Lotman among its founders, sign systems are viewed as modelling systems. Modelling systems are defined as element structures and rules of their combination, while sign systems are seen as world models. Different sign systems model the world in different ways (Żyłko 2007: 122). These differences, the different modes, are different mainly in their degrees of abstraction. There are systems of minimum abstraction and systems of maximum abstraction, with a whole gamut of sign systems in between, characterized by different degrees of abstraction. The degree of abstraction is important because it is linked to the capability of modelling such sign systems. Systems of maximum abstraction are only modestly open to modelling,¹⁰ while sign systems of insignificant abstraction are extremely open to modelling the world¹¹ (ibid.: 123). Lotman suggested that sign systems of natural languages are situated somewhere halfway between the two extremes. But it is precisely the natural language system where Lotman found the basis for his theory of modelling systems. Language

¹⁰ An instance is provided by mathematical systems (set theory).

¹¹ An instance is provided by sign systems of religions.

was therefore assigned the role of the primary modelling system. The so-called secondary modelling systems start from language and then form additional superstructures, thus creating sign systems at some other level (Lotman 1977; Lotman 2005). Secondary modelling systems include all cultural and artistic sign systems. More specifically, Lotman distinguishes three types of secondary modelling systems or cultural languages: first, language as a higher sign system (myth, literature, poetry); second, language as metalanguage or a part of metalanguage (art, music, dance, etc.; criticism and history); and third, language as a model or analogue (language of film, dance, music, painting, etc.) (Torop 2012: 290–291; Tamm 2019). Advertising belongs to the secondary modelling system, where language functions as a model or analogue.

Language and all other modelling systems share an important feature: the normative function (Lotman 1977). These systems are normative, i.e. they establish and impose norms and rules.¹² To that extent one can think of advertising as another normative system. More precisely, we can state that the re-elaboration of the already existing systems of values, ideologies, knowledge, behaviour, breakthroughs and achievements in advertising follows the normativity principle – the observance or breach of the norm. In this respect, advertisements select their material from the semiosphere following two principles: one refers to the observance of the norm, while the other implies breaking the norm. Observance of the norm reveals the normative character of the advertisement in the true sense of the word: it prescribes the mode of behaving and feeling, evokes the addressee's social roles and status, their duties and expectations, it constructs the addressee as competent or uncertain and susceptible to foreign influences, that is, it includes all the techniques of manipulation an advertisement uses to make its addressee do things that conform to the accepted rules of the society and the time framing the advertisement.¹³ One can observe the retroactive effect here, too: the ecological impact that advertisements have both on the semiosphere and on the deep-level changes that keep affecting and modifying it (Volli 2003: IX).

The fact that advertisements represent another secondary modelling system made them a powerful means of shaping the world. Their modelling ability accounts for phenomena presented in the remainder of this paper: the existence of bilingual advertisements, advertising the same product in three languages, drawing on the local context, and evoking the global context. In the analysis that follows, it will be shown that local and global events served as resources for advertisement creators, who took their ideas for the advertising activities from them.

¹² The binary opposition introducing dynamics into modelling systems is observance or breach of the norm. This relationship of tension between the dominant norm and deviations from it is the most responsible for the dynamics inherent to modelling systems (Lotman 2005).

¹³ On the other hand, deviations from the norm can give rise to all kinds of reactions in the semiosphere, open some ethical or legal questions, etc. In 19th-century advertisements deviations from the norm were minimal, at least within the corpus used in this research.

2.2. BILINGUALISM IN THE ADVERTISEMENTS

In the analysed corpus, the language in which the newspaper was published did not always determine the language of the advertisements printed on its last page. There were many instances of German advertisements in Italian newspapers and Italian advertisements in German newspapers.¹⁴ In the Croatian newspaper *Naša sloga* both Italian and Slovenian advertisements, in addition to Croatian, were published. Mixing languages within the same advertisement was also quite typical in the present corpus. This practice led to the appearance of bilingual advertisements which are common in the analysed corpus. Furthermore, the trilingual *Omnibus* newspaper published advertisements in Italian, Croatian and German equally.

Example 3 shows a bilingual advertisement. It has been taken from *Omnibus* dated 23 April 1910. Within a single frame this advertisement conveys an unchanged commercial message in two different languages: in the present example, Croatian and Italian. Bilingual advertisements reflected the multilingualism of the town embracing numerous ethnic groups and minorities. But mere reflection was not the only function of bilingualism and bilingual (or multilingual) advertisements. In fact, one can speak about advertising as a pragmatic force with its perlocutionary effects. In this sense advertisements contributed to the city's multilingualism and co-created it.

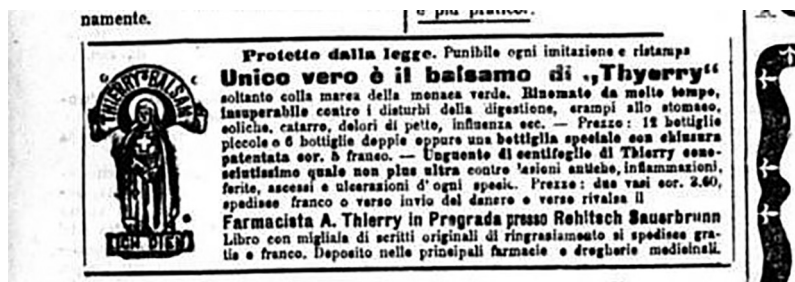


Example 3. Bilingual advertisement; *Omnibus*, 23rd April 1910

¹⁴ I did not come across Croatian advertisements in either German or Italian newspapers. In the sociolinguistic hierarchy, Croatian was in a different position in terms of prestige and public visibility.

2.3. THE PRACTICE OF ADVERTISING THE SAME PRODUCT IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

Advertisements of one and the same product (or brand) in three different languages are reproduced in Examples 4a, 4b and 4c. Example 4a shows a version of an advertisement in Italian which appeared in the most popular newspaper, *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, dated 1 July 1906. Example 4b shows an advertisement promoting the same product in German, which was taken from *Omnibus*, 5 January 1906. The last example, 4c, appeared in *Naša sloga* dated 27 March 1913, and is the Croatian version of the advertisement. What is characteristic of such advertisements is that the overall organization of the verbal and visual elements remained almost unchanged in all three languages.¹⁵ The advertisers did not distinguish between the publics according their language or ethnicity, and the product was always represented in the same way.



Example 4a. Advertisement of one and the same product in Italian; *Il Giornaleto di Pola*, 1st July 1906



Example 4b. Advertisement of one and the same product in German; *Omnibus*, 5th January 1906

¹⁵ In other words, these should not be taken as transnational campaigns of today.



Example 4c. Advertisement of one and the same product in Croatian; *Naša sloga*, 27th March 1913

The typographic and visual differences visible in the German, Italian and Croatian version of the advertisement had no particular semiotic functions or specific meanings traceable to the ethnic or linguistic aspects of the addressee, of the media (newspaper), or of the environment in which the newspaper circulated.

2.4. REFERENCES TO THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Two examples of advertisements drawing on the local context are provided below. They belong to two different areas: human healthcare and national politics.

In an 1887 commercial series (so-called *strenna*) included in the *Leco di Pola*, a certain Mr. Francesetto A. Rodinis, a pharmacist from Pula, advertised his medicine against the malaric fever by pointing out that its efficiency was proved “during the latest outbreak of the malaric fever afflicting the district of Pula”; *durante l'epoca dell'ultima epidemia di febbre di malaria regnata nel circondario Polese* (*Strenna del periodico Leco di Pola*, 1887). At that time, it was tested on many patients and its efficiency was confirmed. In the latter half of the 19th century Pula mostly suffered from outbreaks of three kinds: malaria, cholera and typhus. Writing about malaria in the Istrian peninsula, Bernardo Schiavuzzi, a physician, mentions 1886 as another year in which Pula was afflicted with the malaric fever (Schiavuzzi 1889: 332). Besides the efforts of the municipal authorities and famous physicians (such as Robert Koch), the project involved even the national level: the Board for Fighting Malaria in Istria and Dalmatia¹⁶ was founded in Vienna in 1909 (Blažević 1987: 101). Efforts to stop these outbreaks, reduce their frequency and the mortality rate were numerous and visible not only in palpable improvements of the town's hygienic and sanitary conditions – for instance, supplying the town with unpolluted drinking water, as

¹⁶ Odbor za suzbijanje malarije u Istri i Dalmaciji (Blažević 1987: 101).

we can read in Benussi – but also in the scientific and medical activity of physicians like Robert Koch and others, as well as in the publication of scientific works on the problem, such as the voluminous study by Schiavuzzi quoted here (Schiavuzzi 1889). These efforts manifested themselves in advertising discourse, too.

The second example has to do with the political context of preparing the Croatian people for going to the polls. The example is taken from the Croatian newspaper *Naša sloga*:

Za izbore u Istri izdala je tiskara Laginja i drug. u Puli zgodno sastavljenu knjižicu na 88 stranica: Izborni zakon za sabor Istre pučkim načinom protumačen i dvije velike Zemljovidne karte Istre jednu za izbor obćenitog razreda, a drugu za izbor vanjskih občina i gradova. (Naša sloga, 20 May 1914)¹⁷

On the occasion of the elections in Istria the Laginja and others house published in Pula a nicely composed brochure comprising 88 pages: the Electoral Law for the Assembly of Istria, popularly interpreted, and two large maps of Istria, one for the general election, the other for the elections in the districts and towns outside Pula area.

This latter example illustrates the political role of advertisements in raising national consciousness among Istrian Croats.¹⁸ Here, advertising functioned as a sort of “aid” or a lesson in political issues. Advertisements actively participated in all important national issues like the elections, trying to bring them “closer” to the common people.

2.5. EVOKING GLOBAL CONTEXTS

The global context was referenced in a variety of ways. Firstly, it included tragic events such as the First World War. Secondly, also mentioned were more positive events that documented 19th-century progress in the fields of knowledge and science, particularly international scientific and medical congresses. Finally, some ludic moments embodied in the organization of so-called universal expositions, where the magical and miraculous coexisted with technological achievements and scientific discoveries. Some examples of advertisements appear below.

1. The First World War:

Lipik (Slavonija)

I za rata, zimi i ljeti u prometu

(Hrvatski list, 1917)

Lipik (Slavonia)

Open both winter and summer, even during the war

¹⁷ The advertisement is discussed in Bertoša 2010 in the sociosemiotic framework of its social and possible political role.

¹⁸ Political and national characteristics were mainly connected with Croatian national issues, with the idea of stirring national consciousness, awareness, patriotism and the like, or else they explicitly addressed a nationally differentiated audience (Croats, Slavs).

The First World War (1914–1918) had a significant impact on the publication of advertisements in particular newspapers, especially on those documented in the German *Polaer Tagblatt*. On the one hand, their number considerably decreased during the war years. While they used to be numerous and varied in the preceding years, during the First World War they became scarce and less diverse. On the other hand, there is a noticeable rise in the frequency of advertising theatre performances and cinema shows, performances of circuses and touring companies. This entertainment context had a standard manipulating impact on the public. It was meant to divert it away from the anxieties and fears brought by the war and to offer them moments in which to forget about both their personal and global political problems. Of course, such advertisements never openly mentioned the war. The *Polaer Tagblatt's* target public consisted mainly of numerous Austrian Navy officers and civil servants with their families, posted in Pula and particularly affected by the war. Besides such entertaining interventions meant to cheer up the public at a collective level, some advertisements referred to the war context in order to create the referential illusion that the current events were not big enough to prevent some everyday practices and modes of action, that “things keep functioning without interruption”. The above advertisement thus tried to portray the Lipik spa as a “strong” sender that the potential addressees could rely on and count on at all times – in all seasons, and under all circumstances, not excluding the world war. This once again created the same referential illusion of safety and was another attempt at influencing both the collective “mental conditions and moods”, and the overall public opinion, not only in the sense of caring for morality and mental health, but also in the context of politically manipulating the public.

2. International scientific and medical congresses:

a) *“Miei Signori! Io credo che la cura della bocca (cura dei denti) per molte ragioni, deve essere manifesta come ogni altra disciplina, se noi consideriamo che l'apertura della bocca forma la porta entrata all'interno del corpo.” Con queste parole il Dr. Wolf di Zagabria accompagnava la sua relazione al XII Congresso internazionale di medicina a Mosca. Lo stesso poi continuava: “Io non credo di separarmi dal vero se ascrivo la cagione di molti cattari ai polmoni e intestinali, all'anemia ecc. ad una negligentissima cura della bocca. I casi non sono rari, dove mediante un'accurata nettezza della bocca anche tutte queste malattie spariscono. [...]*

Tutte queste pretensioni e condizioni per una efficacissima e razionale cura dei denti vengono soddisfatte pienamente dal Kalodont...

*(Il popolo Istriano, 1898)*¹⁹

“Dear Sirs! I believe there are many reasons for which mouth (teeth) care should become as familiar as any other discipline, if we consider the fact that the mouth cavity forms the entrance door to the interior of our bodies.” These were the words used by Dr Wolf from Zagreb during his presentation at the 12th International Medical Congress in Moscow. He continued: “I do not see myself as swerving away from truth when I trace many forms of lung and intestinal catarrhs, anaemia, etc., to slovenly mouth care. Not infrequently, all of

¹⁹ The advertisement is also reproduced in Bertoša 2008.

these ailments can be eliminated if the mouth is regularly kept clean [...] All these requisites and conditions for highly efficient and deliberate teeth care are wholly met if one uses Kalodont..."

References to scientific congresses, to the latest discoveries and breakthroughs in medicine were especially frequent in promoting tonics, preparations and products for maintaining human health and recovery from illnesses, or for animal, more precisely, livestock, care. Quoting the words spoken by a certain Dr Wolf from Zagreb (constructed within the advertisement as a competent and expert subject in the field of medical sciences), at an international medical congress in Moscow, was meant to guarantee the efficiency of the promoted product – the Kalodont toothpaste – and simultaneously make the addressees understand that the Sarg brand (that produces the Kalodont toothpaste) was also competent. That is, in creating such a link between Kalodont promotion and quoting a scientist at a congress, connotations that are *a priori* associated to his person – expertise, someone to be trusted, scientific discourse, seriousness, authenticity, objectivity, rationality and honesty – are automatically transferred to the sender/manufacturer, i.e. the Sarg brand. In other words, the brand keeps abreast of scientific and medical breakthroughs, it stays on top of the most recent achievements that are just being made public at renowned congresses on a global scale. In a way, this is what makes it even ahead of its time because, when it comes to its products, their full relevance and efficiency are no common facts, but something to be brought about only by the future. The same applies to constructing the potential addressee: if one wants to be open to recent developments, appreciate recent scientific breakthroughs, belong to the global mainstream in the field of medicine, one will buy the advertised product, of course, thus testifying to one's own inherent cosmopolitanism and breadth of vision. In such a way one also testifies to one's own rationality, a very appreciated social value for the period under consideration.

b) *Medaglie d'argento: XI Congresso medico Roma 1894, IV Congresso ital. di chim. e farm. Napoli 1894.*

(Advertisement for Seravallo cinchona wine (Vinum Chinae) rich in iron; *Il popolo Istriano*, 1898)

Silver medals: 11th Medical Congress in Rome 1894, 4th Italian Chem. and Pharm. Congress in Naples 1894.

Pointing out awards and certificates awarded at various medical congresses as evidence of the efficiency and legitimacy of the advertised product was a common way in which the sender tried to influence the addressee and prove the quality of the product. In this way, such advertisements established correlations to scientific discourse and appealed to the addressee's rationality that would help them recognize the "true" and "real" value of the advertised product, i.e., they admitted to the addressee's capacity to autonomously judge its quality. Besides, the sender would thus demonstrate that they themselves were an integral part of world current events, making it manifest that they were not only up to date, but, taking an active part in them, being awarded and acknowledged.

3. Universal expositions

Medaglia d' oro: Esposizioni internazionali: Venezia 1894, Kiel 1894, Amsterdam 1894, Berlino 1895, Parigi 1895, Quebec 1897.

(Advertisement for Seravallo cinchona wine rich in iron; *Il popolo Istriano*, 1898)

Gold medal: International expositions: Venice 1894, Kiel 1894, Amsterdam 1894, Berlin 1895, Paris 1895, Quebec 1897.

Expositions typical of the 18th and 19th century made manifest the existence of various technologies, discoveries, objects and commodities, affirming them as socioeconomic and symbolical values of a society emerging from the first industrial revolution (Abruzzese and Colombo 1994: 169–178; Baculo 2003). They were heterogeneous – universal, international, regional, local, colonial – and functioned as spaces of experiment and expanding consumption, of collective imageries, stereotypes and of faith in progress. Thus, they can be viewed as a typical product of an industrial civilization and massive culture (Abruzzese and Colombo 1994: 170). Evidence of the quality and validity of the product being promoted was not rarely offered within a context of expositions held both in Europe and on the American and Asian continent. By means of awards assigned to a particular product – and these were regularly gold or silver medals – the sender tried to convince the addressee of the value of their product. However, it was also a message of cosmopolitanism, of the producer staying actively in touch with global events, participating in them, of their being a part of the larger contemporary cultural context.

The analysed advertisements show that the modelling feature of advertising discourse achieved perlocutionary effects from its beginnings. It was an operative force that acted on the world, modified it and changed it. It was equally involved in the complex system of other discourses in the semiosphere: in the analysed advertisement medical, scientific, political, cultural and entertainment/ludic discourses are evident. These discourses permeated each other. Their boundaries were porous and flexible. In that sense, one can regard modelling systems as open systems that enter into mutual relationships, influence each other and encourage their own transformation and modification.

2.6. ADDITIONAL REMARKS

Advertisements are never created *ex nihilo*, and the local and social context of the city of Pula and the Istrian peninsula undoubtedly gave impetus to the form and content of advertising messages. In this paper, this context was considered as a semiotic resource from which senders draw ideas for their advertising practices. Multilingualism was significant, and it was realized both at the private and public level. Multilingual communication events in everyday life were present in the town, but there were also organized multilingual publishing activity, as well as advertising in German, Italian and Croatian, either in the form of the described bilingual advertisements, or in the form of advertising the same product in the three languages. These two forms of advertisements seem to point to

national profiling of the recipients, but in fact it is a tactic that simultaneously respects and abolishes national diversity. Namely, the form and content of such advertisements did not change: they were simply translated. Their senders did not take into account different political, social and economic conditions in which the speakers of the different languages lived. Therefore, one can conclude that it was actually a matter of language profiling, but without involving nationality. The creators of advertisements simply tried to reach as many recipients as possible.

However, advertising tactics that insisted on national identity and profiled the recipients of advertisements on an ethnic basis were also found in the corpus. These were almost exclusively advertisements aimed at Croats published in Croatian newspapers (*Naša sloga*) and/or in Croatian (*Omnibus*). With their representation of national contents, they tried to awaken the national consciousness of Istrian Croats. From a semiotic perspective, this is an important indicator because it testifies that advertising, from its very outset, had an important ideological function and political role in this area. Rather than mere announcements of a service or a product, advertisements had a double political function: on one hand, they sought to promote the importance of national awareness among Istrian Croats, and on the other hand, the awakening of their national consciousness as a historical fact was re-elaborated in the advertising discourse and used for the purpose of selling a product (soap, rolling paper of *Saints Cyril and Methodius Society for Istria*).

Another tactic in which it was possible to recognize ideological bases was advertising services and products labelled with the attribute *Wiener*, quite often in the *Polaer Tagblatt/Morgenblatt*, i.e., in a German newspaper that targeted numerous Austrian Navy officers and civil servants with their families as the primary recipients. It was associated with the discursive creation of the cosmopolitan spirit of Pula in the Austrian Empire. The attribution of the adjective *Wiener* included a wide range of products and services such as tailors, bakeries, hairdressers, cakes, guest appearances of Viennese artists etc. It was supposed to create the illusion that in Pula one can buy/get everything that exists in imperial Vienna, and to promote the sense of attachment and belonging to the Empire.

Re-elaboration of the local context included the important political event of the elections among Croats. This event was used as an opportunity for advertising discourse to present itself as an “educator” and benevolent advisor in political and national issues. Moreover, a local pharmacist from Pula advertised his medicine against the malaric fever by pointing out its efficiency proved “here” (in the district of Pula) and “recently” (during the latest outbreak of the malaric fever). Using the tactics of spatial and temporal closeness with the recipients of the advertising message, the pharmacist evoked the effects of trust, authenticity and domestic origin of his medicine which could eventually ensure its sale.

In addition to the local micro-context, world and European events were also used for ideological, educational, political and manipulative purposes. These events belong to three discursive fields: political (the First World War), medical/scientific (congresses) and cultural (universal expositions). Advertisements from all three fields sought to create illusions: (1)

the illusion of safety (regardless of the First World War), (2) the illusion of scientific and medical progress, i.e. the illusion that the advertising discourse keeps abreast of the latest medical discoveries and scientific knowledge and participates in their events, and (3) the illusion that advertised products are recognized for their inherent values at important world events, i.e. that the advertising discourse actively participates in world or at least European cultural events such as universal expositions.

3. IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION: FINAL REMARKS

In the present paper advertising was approached as a space of cultural re-elaboration and a secondary modelling system as explained in the work of Lotman and his successors. Lotman's semiotics of culture sees culture as a bounded and organized unity comparable to language itself: "Defining culture as a sign system subjected to structural rules allows us to view it as a language, in the general semiotic sense of the term" (Tamm 2019: 7). Thus, as Tamm notices, from a semiotic perspective, culture is a multilingual system in which, side by side with natural languages, there exist cultural languages or secondary modelling systems based on the former (ibid.). As presented in this paper, from its very beginnings, advertising took its own semiotic cultural participation as one of the secondary modelling systems.

In this sense, advertising sieved through the whole context at its disposal for cultural elements endowed with positive social value, with connotations of rationality, cosmopolitanism, objectivity, faith in progress, science, technology, industry, of staying in touch with the latest events at the European and global levels, with recent achievements and breakthroughs in science and industry. It frequently stressed practical values of the advertised product (efficiency, power, quality), or it represented them as instruments for actualizing some other values or promoting ideologies – such as raising national consciousness. Attention was paid to concrete, dry facts and various data, as well as to establishing logical connections, appealing to the addressee's rationality and competence.

Apart from all this, by modelling the world in which it was born, advertising addressed its characteristics and used them for its own purposes that surpassed a purely marketing function and entered the world of symbolism, ideologies, political interests of particular groups, and of the dominant value system, proving itself to be a powerful social and public discourse. This is the interpretative framework accommodating the phenomena presented in the paper: newspaper and advertising multilingualism, emergence of bilingual advertisements, advertising one and the same product in several languages, references to the local Pula and Istrian contexts, evoking the global European or world contexts. Thus, through their function of shaping the world, advertisements in their turn retroactively effected changes in the semiosphere that had generated them and made their circulation possible. In this sense, the analysed advertisements from the end of the 19th century

show that from its very beginning, the advertising discourse did not only represent or reflect reality. On the contrary, it appeared as part of reality that activated mechanisms of change and transformation.

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VIŠEJEZIČNOST, SIMBOLIZAM I ILUZIJE U DEVETNAESTOSTOLJETNOM REKLAMNOM DISKURSU: NA PRIMJERU PULJSKIH NOVINA

U ovome radu analiziraju se neka od obilježja reklamnoga diskursa u Istri, ponajprije u gradu Puli, u razdoblju od druge polovice 19. stoljeća do raspada Austro-Ugarske Monarhije. Cilj je analize pokazati na koje je načine u reklamnom diskursu reelaboriran značenjski materijal raspršen u određenoj kulturnoj i povijesnoj realnosti. Kao glavna austrijska vojna luka i bitno jadransko pomorsko središte, Pula je nacionalno, kulturno, jezično, pa i vjerski bila veoma heterogen grad. Njezin zemljopisni položaj na mjestu susreta triju kulturnih krugova – slavenskog, romanskog i germanskog – i konkretne povijesne prilike uvjetovali su prisutnost različitih etniciteta (uz pripadnike hrvatske, talijanske i njemačke nacionalnosti koji su brojčano prevladavali, bilo je i Slovenaca, Čeha, Slovaka, Mađara, Poljaka, Rumunja i dr.), višejezičnost, visoku pokretljivost stanovnika i migracije. Analiza obuhvaća reklame koje su izlazile u novinama tiskanim na hrvatskom (primjerice, *Naša sloga*, *Hrvatski list*), talijanskom (primjerice, *L'Eco di Pola*, *Il Popolo Istriano*, *Il Giornaleto di Pola*) i njemačkom jeziku (primjerice, *Polaer Tagblatt*). U onodobnom oglašivanju dvije su pojave čvrsto povezane s višejezičnošću posebno relevantne. Prva podrazumijeva posvjedočenost tzv. dvojezičnih reklama, a druga oglašivanje jednih te istih proizvoda na trima različitim jezicima – talijanskom, hrvatskom i njemačkom ovisno o tome u kojim su novinama oglasi bili objavljavani. Na obilježje višejezičnosti nastavljaju se još dva obilježja reklamnoga diskursa kojima ću se baviti: s jedne strane, referencije na lokalne (puljske, istarske) odrednice, a s druge strane, evokacija globalnog (austroougarskog, svjetskog) konteksta. U radu se na analiziranim odabranim primjerima pokazuje kako je višejezičnost zajedno s referencijama na lokalni i globalni kontekst imala značajan utjecaj na oblikovanje i funkcije reklamnog diskursa toga vremena te da je reklamni diskurs kao oblik društvenoga diskursa utjecao na oblikovanje kolektivnih identiteta kao i na stvaranje i distribuciju znanja, uvida i iskustava.

Ključne riječi: oglašivanje, višejezičnost, 19. stoljeće, Pula, semiotika