

# Intertextuality in beer commercials

---

Pavić, Sven

Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad

2018

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Filozofski fakultet**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:142:137000>

Rights / Prava: [In copyright](#) / [Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-05-14**



**FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET**  
SVEUČILIŠTE JOSIPA JURJA STROSSMAYERA U OSIJEKU

Repository / Repozitorij:

[FFOS-repository - Repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Osijek](#)



DIGITALNI AKADEMSKI ARHIVI I REPOZITORIJ

Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Studij: Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i njemačkog jezika i književnosti

Sven Pavić

**Intertekstualnost u reklamama za pivo**

Završni rad

Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Goran Milić

Osijek, 2018.

Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Odsjek za engleski jezik i književnost

Studij: Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i njemačkog jezika i književnosti

Sven Pavić

## **Intertekstualnost u reklamama za pivo**

Završni rad

Znanstveno područje: humanističke znanosti

Znanstveno polje: filologija

Znanstvena grana: anglistika

Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Goran Milić

Osijek, 2018.

J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Study Programme: Double Major BA Study Programme in English Language and Literature and German Language and Literature

Sven Pavić

## **Intertextuality in Beer Commercials**

Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: Goran Milić, PhD

Osijek, 2018.

J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of English

Study Programme: Double Major BA Study Programme in English Language and Literature and German Language and Literature

Sven Pavić

## **Intertextuality in Beer Commercials**

Bachelor's Thesis

Scientific area: humanities

Scientific field: philology

Scientific branch: English studies

Supervisor: Goran Milić, PhD

Osijek, 2018.

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	6
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	7
<b>2 Theoretical Background</b> .....	8
<b>2.1 Discourse and Discourse Analysis</b> .....	8
<b>2.2 Intertextuality</b> .....	9
<b>3 Analysis Design</b> .....	11
<b>4 Analysis of the Commercials</b> .....	13
<b>(1) Bud Light – Spuds makes a comeback</b> .....	13
<b>(2) Bud Light – Bud Knight</b> .....	15
<b>(3) Carlton Draught – Beer chase</b> .....	17
<b>(4) Carlton Draught – Flashdance</b> .....	19
<b>(5) Karlovačko – Đuru, the local guru</b> .....	20
<b>(6) Karlovačko – Retro</b> .....	21
<b>5 Conclusion</b> .....	23
<b>6 References</b> .....	25
<b>Appendices</b> .....	27

## **Abstract**

This paper provides an analysis of six beer commercials and their use of intertextuality, which the advertisers use in order to establish a favourable image of the advertised product. The theoretical aspect of the paper deals with the terms “discourse”, “discourse analysis”, and “intertextuality”, the understanding of which is a prerequisite to understanding the analysis. Intertextuality is a characteristic of a text and discourse to either allude to or directly or indirectly quote another text or discourse. In doing so, the resulting text or discourse consists of numerous layers, and the contained meaning goes well beyond the written or spoken. Therefore, this language feature is frequently utilised by companies in their advertising in order to gain the affection of the target audience. Advertisers reference various elements that are an established part of human culture, e.g. movies, literature, songs, etc. The analysis offers concrete examples of the intertextual references advertisers use in their commercials. Furthermore, an approach explaining the reasoning behind choosing a certain reference, as well as the effects it may have on the audience is included in the analysis. The commercials selected for analysis are commissioned by three different brands of beer, viz. Bud Light, Carlton Draught, and Karlovačko. The specific brands were chosen because they sell and advertise their products primarily in their respective countries, Bud Light in the United States, Carlton Draught in Australia, and Karlovačko in Croatia. This provides the analysis with variation in content, and provides more information displaying distinctive advertisements approaches around the globe.

*Key words:* intertextuality, beer commercials, advertisers, intertextual reference

# 1 Introduction

Advertising has become an established part of our everyday lives. This is supported by the fact that the majority of people ignore the sheer amount of advertisements one is exposed to on a daily basis. Even if one chooses to disregard the myriad of products advertised, the advertisers have found ways to influence the unconscious thought processes of potential customers.

Advertising has followed trends and adapted to changes throughout the years, which resulted in electronic advertising being the preferred method of many who wish to advertise their product. As a result, the competition has become bigger and the amounts a company is expected to pay for their product to be advertised have gone up. If a company expects to see a return on their investment, the commercials have to have a lasting impression on a large number of people. The small time frame the advertisers have at their disposal is filled with many intertextual references. They will serve as connections in the minds of the audience, which consciously or unconsciously associate the brand and their product with their prior knowledge acquired during their lives, which in turn established a favourable picture of the product advertised.

The aim of this paper is to isolate some of the techniques, primarily, but not limited to, intertextual references, the advertisers use during the creating process of their commercials, and to suggest how intertextuality is used in order to evoke a positive response to a specific product.

This niche was chosen for the analysis, given that beer companies cannot rely on the rational appeal of the product and are required to take innovative approaches in their commercials should they wish to differentiate themselves from the competition.

This paper consists of the following chapters: The second Chapter provides the theoretical background, namely the basics of discourse, discourse analysis, and intertextuality, which is a prerequisite to understating the idea behind the analysis of the commercials. Chapter 3 deals with the analysis design and the thought process of selecting specific commercials. What follows is the analysis of six commercials in Chapter 4. In the end, Chapter 5 contains the conclusion.



## 2 Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Discourse and Discourse Analysis

The term “discourse” carries numerous meanings depending on the fields of study, which results in many linguists offering their own interpretation of the subject. The fact that there is no unanimous agreement regarding the definition of “discourse” makes it a relatively difficult topic for analysis, however this also provides anyone interested with many unique ways to do further research in the particular field.

According to Johnstone (2008), “[t]o discourse analysts, “discourse” usually means actual instances of communicative action in the medium of language...” (p. 2). Furthermore, she claims the following:

Discourse is both the source of this knowledge (people’s generalizations about language are made on the basis of the discourse they participate in) and the result of it (people apply what they already know in creating and interpreting new discourse). (p. 3)

On the contrary, in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton (2001) suggest that “‘discourse’ has generally been defined as anything ‘beyond the sentence’” (p. 1), which would suggest that next to the apparent structure of language, the function should also be taken into consideration. For that reason, language should not be observed as an isolated phenomenon, and as Gee (1999) states, “[w]e continually and actively build and rebuild our worlds not just through language but through language used in tandem with actions, interactions, non-linguistic symbol systems, objects, tools, technologies, and distinctive way of thinking, valuing, feeling, and believing” (p. 10).

In order to research “discourse” and its contribution to language, a new discipline within the domain of linguistics was established, and it is called discourse analysis. “Discourse analysis is concerned with the contexts in and the processes through which we use oral and written language to specific audiences, for specific purposes, in specific settings” (He, 2003, p. 428). This means that every discourse created is unique, and depending on the given situation and interlocutors participating, it will change and adapt to create successful communication. Therefore, discourse analysis focuses on the use of language which is stimulated by real communicative needs, which, if executed properly, result in a rewarding interaction. He (2003) continues to explain the uniqueness of analysing discourse:

What makes discourse analysis stand out as a discipline independent from although intricately interwoven with other domains of linguistic inquiry is that, more than any other domains of linguistics, discourse analysis emphasizes that language is not merely a self-contained system of symbols but more importantly a mode of doing, being, and becoming. (p. 429)

The complete significance of language in everyday life is often neglected, and its complexity and usefulness misunderstood. Therefore, the importance of discourse analysis, which offers insight into language, is supported by the claim that “one cannot understand language fully without looking at the language use” (He, 2003, p. 428).

## **2.2 Intertextuality**

The main focus of this paper is to analyse commercials and display which intertextual references, and why, were used during their making. Now that the concepts of discourse and discourse analysis are explained, and a different approach to language use introduced, it is important to examine the central term of this paper, namely “intertextuality”.

At the beginning it is important to see how Gadavani (2002) interprets the connection between discourse and intertextuality:

The inter-relational quality of discourse prevents it from being interpreted literally. Some linguists and language philosophers term this dependency relationship between meaning of discourse and its history and context ‘intertextuality’. In this case, intertextual analysis is an attempt to find the traces society has in discourse and how discourse is designed to interact with society. (p. 36)

According to Norman Fairclough (as cited in Gee, 1999), “Intertextuality is basically the property texts have of being full of snatches or other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth” (p. 47). Similarly, Al-Siyami (2003) specifies intertextuality as “a process of reference to textual and contextual features from which the user arouses the attention and memory of the readers to original sources that are similar in content and form” (p. 42).

“Texts can bear intertextual traces of other texts in many way...” (Johnstone, 2008, p. 164) and there are a number of approaches how a text can incorporate words originally found in another

one. “It can directly quote another text ... or indirectly quote it ... or can just allude to what hearers or readers in the know will realize are words taken from some other source” (Gee, 1993, p. 46).

Advertisers have found clever ways of making their advertisements as impactful as possible, and as this paper will demonstrate, “[i]n advertising, intertextuality involves allusions to pop culture, other ads, and the like” (Danesi, 2009, p. 163). Chandler (1994) claims that “[t]his is a particularly self-conscious form of intertextuality: it credits its audience with the necessary experience to make sense of such allusions and offers them the pleasure of recognition”.

The goal of the advertiser is to reach as big of an audience as possible with the intertextual reference, be it a movie, song, literary work, etc. The referenced sources need to be adequately known to the audience, otherwise there may be a risk of the audience missing the reference. However, that is not often the case because, according to Withalm (2003), the increasing number of commercials with intertextual references, primarily to movies, indicate that advertisers effectively utilise intertextuality, which results in favourable response to the advertised product.

### 3 Analysis Design

A total of six beer commercials are analysed in the following chapter. The advertised beers can be classified into three different groups according to the country for which both the product and the commercial are intended for. Three different countries were deliberately chosen in order to provide more insight into advertising tactics around the globe. Commercials (1) and (2) show Bud Light, whose customer base is primarily located in the United States. The following two commercials, (3) and (4), are advertisements for an Australian beer called Carlton Draught. Finally, commercials (5) and (6) display Karlovačko, whose country of origin is Croatia.

All the commercials were accessed on YouTube. The reason being that some commercials only aired in certain countries and for a limited time period. YouTube offers free and easy access to the commercials, and also the option of unlimited replays until one detects all the nuances within the commercial.

The analysed commercials were selected for their relevance in the market and the range of information they offer about the trends in the advertising industry, both from the past and the present. Commercial (4) was released in 2006, which makes it the oldest amongst the selected commercials, and commercial (2) is the newest out of the six, with its release date being early 2018.

Commercials for Karlovačko, (5) and (6), originally only aired in Croatian language. In order to make the analysis understandable to everyone, Croatian commercials are presented and analysed in a translated form, courtesy of the author. These translations were adapted in order to make the cultural references understandable to non-native speakers of Croatian, while still preserving the essence of the intertextual link.

Every beer commercial is accompanied by a respective image, 1 through 6, providing a visual connection to the text that follows. It should be noted that the images are the company's promotional material accompanying the particular commercial or screenshots from the corresponding YouTube video, and as such are subject to quality differences, mainly due to the variation in the uploaded material.

Every entry contains a brief plot overview making it possible to follow the thought process behind the analysis even if one is not familiar with the commercial in question.

In addition, commercials which contain references that are either general, meaning the intertextual link is not connected to a concrete idea, or allude to more than a single identical element of cultural knowledge are accompanied by at least one factual example of the intertextual reference, be it written works, movies, songs, etc.

## 4 Analysis of the Commercials

### (1) Bud Light – Spuds makes a comeback



Image 1: Brian and Spuds MacKenzie

This advertisement was first aired during the 2017 Super Bowl, which is the most important event of the year for every reputable brand wanting to reach an audience of millions of people. According to Gould (2017), more than 111 million viewers watched the 2016 Super Bowl and the numbers are increasing by the year. Moreover, a 30-second ad during the Super Bowl can cost upwards of \$5 million, which means that Bud Light had to pay a premium of more than \$15 million for their commercial in 2017.

The plot of the commercial is fairly simple at first glance. The ad's protagonist Brian is visited by Spuds Mackenzie, the soul of a dog, who is unhappy with the fact that Brian does not want to hang out with his friends tonight. Spuds transports Brian to the past and shows him what happened the last few times when Brian missed several night outs with his friends, who had a great time. At the end Spuds teleports Brain to the present in front of his friend's house and leaves him with a 30 pack of Bud Light for him and his friends. Soon after that Spuds makes a flying exit and the commercial ends with the theme song and a picture of Bud Light beer next to saluting Spuds.

From the very beginning of the commercial it is evident that the short story offers many layers to be discovered. Brian is portrayed as a guy in his late 20s who does not obey the stereotypical patterns of behaviour. Brian is very direct while rejecting his friend's invitation to go out, and

instead of conjuring lies, he admits that he has no good excuse and simply does not feel like hanging out with them. Many people would not act like Brian does, which makes him unique. Bud Light capitalized on the fact that every individual wants to be different from the masses and although humans rarely exhibit unique behaviour patterns, everyone likes to think they are special. By making Brian seem like an ordinary guy who despite his commonness stands out from the norm, Bud Light succeed in connecting the audience to their protagonist, forcing the viewer to identify themselves with Brian.

The lights go out and a thunder in the background announces the appearance of Spuds. Since Spuds is a ghost, this cliché is known to almost anyone who watched a horror movie prior to this commercial. This general reference makes it easier for the introduction of a new character without having any need to spend extra time explaining Spuds' transparency nor his ability to fly.

However, Spuds MacKenzie's appearance in 2017 carries numerous implications which might not be instantly apparent to everyone. The fictional dog character was a huge hit since the late 1980s when the company started using him as their mascot. The Bull Terrier was of great importance to Bud Lights until his fame and the company's reputation were damaged by Zorn's article "Spuds Is A Dud As A Party Guy –he's A Girl" from 1987 in which it is stated that the dog used during filming is in fact female. This in turn sparked the interests of many and a great amount of controversies surrounding Spuds' character were his downfall. Interestingly enough, during the commercial Spuds has a manly voice and talks to Brian using the following words: "I'm a man, you're a man", as if they were creating a new personality for their mascot. The revival of an iconic mascot from the past is no random act since a portion of the target audience still remembers the dog, who evokes a sense of nostalgia for the good old days, which unknowingly forms a closer bond with the product advertised.

Bud Light utilise the emotional appeal of the customers rather than the rational appeal, and next to the feeling of the good old days, they use humour throughout the commercial which is relatable to the majority of people. Spuds says to Brian: "Take my leash, I need to show you something", which will be perceived as funny to many dog owners and lovers who are aware of the fact that sometimes the dogs are the ones having the upper hand during a walk.

The biggest intertextual reference in the commercial is the connection with Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol in Prose*. Similar to Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens' novella, Brian is transported to different time periods of his life with the help of a ghost. Spuds accompanies Brian to the past

where his friends are having a great time making inside jokes. Brian does not find them funny and feels left out. Since the viewer identifies with Brian from the very start, the feeling of loneliness is mutual.

Furthermore, Brian is transported to a pub quiz where his friends do not know the answer to a question that Brian is familiar with. If one observes closely, during the opening scenes there is a “Trivia Night Champion” prize in Brian’s apartment hinting that he excels at quiz nights, which would mean that he has failed his friends on that particular night Spuds is showing him. Moreover, if one takes into consideration the rising popularity of pub quizzes, then it is evident why Bud Light included this reference into their commercial.

The third time jump takes Brian to the presents giving him the opportunity to change the outcome of the night. The commercial merges Bud Light’s protagonist Brian and Charles Dickens’ character Ebenezer Scrooge into one personality. Both characters were negatively perceived throughout the plot, yet the scenarios offer a happy ending. The individual, in this case Brian, would be perceived as an outsider had it not been for Spuds and the beverages he conjured. The immediate effects of the commercials might not be observable, but the meaning and the message hinted were processed. The viewer’s unconscious reaction after linking all intertextual references has an expected outcome. No one wants to be lonely and left out, everyone wants the ending Brian experienced and the easiest way to achieve those goals and be the hero who saves the day is by acquiring all the means the protagonist had at his disposal, i.e. the advertised beer.

## **(2) Bud Light – Bud Knight**



Image 2: Bud Knight



The commercial starts with an aerial view of a battlefield where two opposing armies are battling each other. According to the presence of knights mounted on horses and soldiers wearing plate armour and wielding shields and swords, it can be assumed that the scene is set during the Middle Ages. Bud Light further deepens the intertextual link by adding war flags, horse carts loaded with goods, and catapults to the scenery.

While the king of the losing army, who is completely disinterested by the ongoing battle, is being informed that they are losing, a saviour appears on the hill overlooking the battlefield. A knight in shining armour, which is coincidentally blue with the Bud Light logo on the chest, mounted on his armoured horse with the matching colours and logos comes to save the day. At this point in the commercial and even from the title of the commercial one could notice an example of paronomasia since the knight is called Bud Knight instead of the expected White Knight, which references all the literature and folktales in which the knight comes to someone's aid.

Bud Light introduces a plot twist as the Bud Knight states: "Time to do what must be done" and enters a medieval convenience store, which is surprisingly equipped with automatic sliding doors and neon light signs, instead of helping the folk. The knight purchases a carton of Bud Light and announces that he cannot stay because "a buddy of his" is throwing a birthday party.

Moreover, during the conversation Bud Knight also takes a quick glance at his left arm as if he were wearing a wrist watch, signalling he is uncomfortable in the situation or just in a hurry. Once again humour is shown to be one of the key factors during advertisements which together with unexpected twists in the story form a memorable commercial. Additionally, one of the characters randomly yells: "Dilly Dilly" as the knight first appears. This is the company referencing themselves since this meaningless expression became extremely popular after one of their previous commercials in 2017 called "Banquet". A prime example of how a successful commercial can help the company form intertextual references for the same product, no matter how weird or trivial it might seem.

This commercial, together with the others from a series of similarly themed Bud Light commercials like "Redemption", "Wizard", "The Cart Loadeth", and "Banquet" reference the popular HBO series *Game of Thrones*. An obvious example is the dragon devouring a soldier and the layout of the battle from the start of this commercial which mimic the battlefield scene from "Battle of the Bastards" (episode nine, season six). Furthermore, the whole series of Bud Light commercials contain intertextual links to the series of fantasy novels *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George R. R.

Martin, namely many moments from the books were reconstructed and used by Bud Light in their commercials.

### **(3) Carlton Draught – Beer chase**



Image 3: A group of four running from the police while holding pints of beer

Carlton Draught have taken an innovative approach to advertise their products in order to distinguish themselves from the competition. A group of four friends enters an establishment, presumably a pub or a diner, after which they order the advertised beer. While the camera is subtly focused on the barkeeper pouring the beverage into a Carlton Draught pint, the group throws an open bag full of money on the ground. Even before they could take a sip, the barkeeper points them to the other side of the room where there are more than a dozen police officers and detectives observing them. They hastily exit the room and are presented with a muscle car<sup>1</sup>. Muscle cars have been a symbol of the U.S. since the late 1940s, making this intertextual reference foreshadow the upcoming events and how one should observe them. At this point the audience experiences an unforeseeable turn of events. Although the police are after them, the group decides not to enter the vehicle and all the characters continue running by foot while still holding their pints of beer.

The song “Thunder in your Heart” by John Farnham, which was the theme song of the 1986 movie *RAD*, starts playing and the chase is on. It becomes evident that the advertisers are alluding to the over-the-top American 80s action movies produced in Hollywood which were filled with cops, robbers, and car chases. Even the locations and scenery used in the commercial

---

<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster: “any of a group of American-made 2-door sports coupes with powerful engines designed for high-performance driving”.

resemble those one would expect to find in movies from the 80s. The commercial becomes a parody of all the repetitive scenes, while still keeping things unpredictable and interesting without ever losing the Carlton Draught name out of the frame.

What follows is the well-known movie scene when two workers attempt to cross the street carrying a large glass pane and the characters run through the glass breaking it, however this time the glass does not break and the policemen end up on the floor. It should be noted that this outcome is not new nor revolutionary in the industry since prior movies have toyed with the idea of breaking the old routine, e.g. the movie *Run Lola Run (Lola rennt)* from 1998 offers scenarios with both the glass shattering and being intact.

Many newer inventions of the time like the slow motion technique were especially preferred by the masses, which resulted in Carlton Draught seizing the opportunity in 2012 to use an excessive amount of slow motion scenes in their commercial in order to appeal to the older generations.

Furthermore, the commercial is an intertextual reference to the American automotive manufacturer Saturn Corporation, which was founded in 1985 and classified as defunct just a year prior to Carlton Draught's commercial. Saturn's advertisements showed people driving while not actually being inside a vehicle, which is the exact idea behind Carlton Draught's characters during their car chase.

The group of friends manages to overcome all the hindrances and end up jumping from a bridge on top of a cruiser where they can finally enjoy their beer. It may be not apparent at first, but Carlton Draught suggests that their product is apparently of such quality that the characters did not want to spill a single drop during the whole chase. Carlton Draught hint at the idea that even bad guys can sometimes win in the end, especially when their drink of choice is produced by the company doing the advertisement.

It can be observed that humour is of paramount importance in the advertisement industry and especially if the target audience notices and understands all the references in a particular commercial.

#### (4) Carlton Draught – Flashdance



Image 4: Kevin dancing in front of the Carlton Draught panel

The second commercial by Carlton Draught is an intertextual reference to the audition scene from the iconic movie *Flashdance* from 1983. The protagonist Kevin Kavendish finds himself in front of a group of people who should decide whether or not he has what it takes to be a brewer. Kevin's lack of experience in the field results in him being quickly dismissed by the powers that be. Despite his failure, Kevin does not give up and decides to dance. The song "What A Feeling" by Irene Cara starts playing and it is at this point that it becomes apparent from which 1980s movie the commercial drew its inspiration.

The room is almost identical to the one found in the referenced movie. Kevin's performance is different than the original one from Jennifer Beales, and although the movements may be perceived as identical, Kevin's dance is intended to be humorous. Positive emotions, humour in this particular commercial, are displayed to appeal to the consumers who are stimulated to buy the product.

It is interesting to note that unlike the previous Carlton Draught commercial which referenced Hollywood action movies from the 80s, this one alludes to a movie which can be perceived as one geared more towards the female audience. Women, who are generally not the target audience of beer companies, may be inclined by this commercial to buy a specific brand of beer when faced with numerous options.

Besides the obvious reference to the movie *Flashdance*, Carlton Draught use a whole mind-set of the generation which perceived dance as something that had the power to overcome any

problem. Next to the aforementioned one, it can also be claimed that the following movies had an influence on the making of the commercial: *Fame* from 1980, *Footloose* from 1984, and *Dirty Dancing* from 1987.

#### (5) Karlovačko – Đuru, the local guru



Image 5: Đuru, the local guru

The commercial starts with a narrator introducing the protagonist, who is later revealed as Đuru, the local guru (Đuru, lokalni guru). Karlovačko use Đuru in a series of commercial where he is portrayed as a know-it-all mysterious figure lingering in his man cave giving advice to everyone, in other words one could perceive Đuru as a mock life coach who has all the wisdom one should need.

This particular commercial, although noticeably shorter in duration than the above analysed commercials<sup>2</sup>, contains a plethora of details which only become apparent upon thorough observation. Đuru's library contains various fictional books with titles that were a result of word play and humour, e. g. "How to sell yourself and earn money", "The history of the Carniola sausage", "Songs for people who are lousy singers", and even "49 shades of beer", which is a reference to the novel *Fifty Shades of Grey*, from the trilogy *Fifty Shades*, written by E. L. James and the controversial movie *Fifty Shades of Greys* from 2015.

---

<sup>2</sup> Duration of analysed commercials, according to the uploaded versions on YouTube: (1) 1:36, (2) 1:01, (3) 1:31, (4) 1:31, (5) 0:38, (6) 0:35.

Đuru's room also contains a painting on the wall referring to Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, with the obvious difference being Đuru's head on top of Lisa Gherardini's body.

Subsequently, a scenes during the commercial also shows a necktie decorated with the Croatian checkerboard. This subtle references contains a deeper meaning due to the fact that Croats were the ones to thank for the origin of the necktie (Huzjak, 2008). Moreover, the Croatian checkerboard refers to the Croatian coat of arms, while also representing a national symbol of Croatia during any sporting event.

Some of Đuru's feats are being listed, all of which contain an intertextual reference. The narrator claims that Đuru "knows what the writer wanted to say", alluding to the fact that people are often confused while reading a literary work and are puzzled with the message the author is trying to convey. Also, an identical phrase is commonly used in Croatian when someone did not understand a particular thing: "What did the writer want to say?".

The commercial also adds that Đuru once fulfilled the goldfish's four wishes. Interestingly, the roles of the characters are here reverses as the motif of a goldfish fulfilling three wishes to anyone who catches it is frequently found in folk tales and literary works, e.g. Alexander Pushkin's *The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish* from 1833.

## **(6) Karlovačko – Retro**



Image 6: Disco dance

In 2016 Karlovačko introduced a new product to their line-up. The new beer is classified as unfiltered and is called “retro”, which alludes to a different brewing styles making a comeback and the rising popularity of craft beer<sup>3</sup>. This word play regarding the name is transferred to the idea behind the commercial designed for Karlovačko’s new beer.

The main character, who is played by Ranko Zidarić, who is a famous Croatian actor since the 1980s, is transported back to the good old days after he hears Karlovačko retro bottle being opened. The song “Daddy Cool” by Boney M. from 1976 starts playing and the protagonist begins to boogie.

The scene is set in a disco with all the references of the time one would imagine, such as the dance stage with the disco ball and colourful disco lights. Even the extras, who are dressed in accordance with the 70s disco fashion, add to the impression. Besides the intertextual referenced to a single song, Karlovačko are displaying the whole disco movement that shaped an entire era in human history.

As also seen in previous commercial analyses, advertisers often use nostalgia and references to past to form a favourable image of the product. Finally, Karlovačko claim that they cannot bring the old times back, but the beer from the time, which is retro, that they can.

---

<sup>3</sup> See Barnstein, J. M. (2018, February 22). Unfiltered and Unpretentious: A New, Old Wave in Craft Beer. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/22/dining/drinks/craft-beer-unfiltered.html>

## 5 Conclusion

The analysis of six beer commercials showed that companies often heavily rely on the use of intertextuality. Intertextuality in advertising offers the possibility to convey numerous messages in the limited time and space designed for a specific product. The intertextual references to popular songs, books or movies help form a connection between the product and the audience.

These intertextual links are often connected with elements of general knowledge that are known to the majority of the population, such as songs on top of the charts and blockbusters, both of which are now an established part of the popular culture. This claim is supported by the analysed commercials since every one of them contained at least one reference to a popular book, song, TV series or movie.

Moreover, the analysis of commercials (3) and (6) showed that commercials can reference a whole era in human history, the 80s and the 70s respectively. This leaves the intertextual link open for the audience to interpret in a way that suits them the most. These connections are personal to every individual and are experienced on a deeper, subjective level.

It is shown that all of the analysed commercials contain a great amount of attention to detail. Everything in the scene needs to be perfect, starting from the extras and their outfits, all the way to the credible display of the environment and subtle hints of numerous intertextual references. Furthermore, when one observes the duration of the analysed commercials, it becomes evident that Bud Light and Carlton Draught produce noticeably longer commercial than Karlovačko do, in some cases even more than double the duration. It is all dictated by the market and the potential consumers, which would suggest that preceding market research determined the attention span and willingness of the consumer to watch a certain commercial being lower in the case of Karlovačko's target audience. All this would suggest that the process of creating a seemingly simple commercial with a few intertextual references is a fairly challenging task.

It is interesting to observe how companies from different countries go about their advertisements. Being that the countries of origin and the target audience of Bud Light and Carlton Draught are noticeably larger than the ones of Karlovačko, different approaches to advertisements need to be taken. The references in commercials (1), (2), (3), and (4) are designed in such a way to be understandable to a larger population worldwide. Whereas it is most likely that the majority of Croats would recognise the intertextual reference of Bud Light to *Game of*



*Thrones* or Carlton Draught referencing *Flashdance*, it is not probable that individuals outside Croatia would recognise some of the references from Karlovačko's commercials, i.e. the use of Croatian checkerboard or the necktie. This shows that every commercial is unique and adapted to needs and preferences of the company.

Next to the use of intertextuality, companies also utilise humour in their commercials. Unlike some products like cars or electronic devices, beer companies cannot rely on the rational appeal of their product, thus needing to arouse positive emotions of the audience. A certain beer brand needs to differentiate themselves from the competition in the market, and what better way than humour. Furthermore, commercials (3), (4), (6), and (1) to a certain extent, try to use the past as a means of appealing to the audience. The commercials are designed to evoke a sense of nostalgia, and being that many individuals have fond memories of the past, they would unconsciously associate the brand with a positive memory.

## 6 References

- Al-Siyami, A. W. I. (2013). Intertextuality in Newspaper Advertising. *Journal of Modern Languages*, 23. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JML/article/view/3291/1352>
- Barnstein, J. M. (2018, February 22). Unfiltered and Unpretentious: A New, Old Wave in Craft Beer. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/22/dining/drinks/craft-beer-unfiltered.html>
- Chandler, D. (1994). *Semiotics for Beginners*. Retrieved from <http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/>
- Danesi, M. (2009). *Dictionary of Media and Communications*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe
- Gadavani, S. (2002). Intertextuality as discourse strategy: The case of no-confidence debates in Thailand. In *Leeds Working Paper in Linguistics and Phonetics*, 9. Retrieved from [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125154/leeds\\_working\\_papers\\_in\\_linguistics\\_and\\_phonetics/1947/volume\\_9\\_2002](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125154/leeds_working_papers_in_linguistics_and_phonetics/1947/volume_9_2002)
- Gee, J. P. (1999). *An Introduction to Discourse analysis: Theory and method*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gould, S. (2017, February 5). See how Super Bowl ad costs skyrocketed over the years. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/super-bowl-ad-price-cost-2017-2>
- He, A. W. (2001). Discourse Analysis. In Aronoff, M., & Rees-Miller, J. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Linguistics* (pp. 428-445). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Huzjak, V. (2008). Pokušaj otkrivanja nastanka i razvoja kravate kao riječi i odjevnog predmeta. *Povijesni prilozi*, 34. Retrieved from <https://hrcak.srce.hr/27804>
- Johnstone, B. (2008). *Discourse Analysis*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Muscle car [Def. 1]. (n.d). *Merriam-Webster Online*. Retrieved September 10, 2018, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/muscle%20car>
- Schiffrin, D., Tannen, D., & Hamilton, H. E. (Eds.) (2001). *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Withalm, G. (2003). Commercial intertextuality. Retrieved from [http://www.uni-ak.ac.at/culture/withalm/wit-pdfs/wit03\\_bari2.pdf](http://www.uni-ak.ac.at/culture/withalm/wit-pdfs/wit03_bari2.pdf)

Zorn, E. (1987, September 13). Spuds Is A Dud As A Party Guy –he’s A Girl. Retrieved from [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1987-09-13/news/8703090112\\_1\\_jackie-oles-honey-tree-evil-eye-spuds-mackenzie](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1987-09-13/news/8703090112_1_jackie-oles-honey-tree-evil-eye-spuds-mackenzie)

## Appendices



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Image 6