"Intertextuality in tabloid sport sections"

Dumančić, Davor

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://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:142:824256

Rights / Prava: In copyright / Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-03-28**

FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET
SVEUČILIŠTE JOSIPA JURJA STROSSMAYERA U OSIJEKU

Repository / Repozitorij:

FFOS-repository - Repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Osijek

zir.nsk.hr

SVEUČILIŠTE JOSIPA JURJA STROSSMAYERA U OSIJEKU

dabar
DIGITALNI AKADEMSKI ARHIVI I REPOZITORIJI

Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet

Studij: Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij engleskoga jezika i književnosti i mađarskoga jezika i književnosti

Davor Dumančić

Intertekstualnost u sportskim rubrikama tabloida

Završni rad

Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Goran Milić

Osijek, 2018

Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Studij: Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij engleskoga jezika i književnosti i mađarskoga jezika i književnosti

Davor Dumančić

Intertekstualnost u sportskim rubrikama tabloida

Završni rad

Znanstveno područje: humanističke znanosti

Znanstveno područje: 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 Hungarian Language and Literature

Davor Dumančić

Intertextuality in tabloid sport sections

Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor : Goran Milić, Assistant Professor

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 Hungarian Language and Literature

Davor Dumančić

Intertextuality in tabloid sport sections

Bachelor's Thesis

Scientific area: humanities

Scientific field: philology

Scientific branch: English studies

Supervisor: Goran Milić, Assistant Professor

Osijek, 2018

Abstract

Newspapers and tabloids, after receiving their online counterparts, have become one of the most used types of media in the 21st century. Newspapers and especially tabloids are using particular techniques in order to attract the readers. While the newspapers rely mostly on the information and the relevance of that information, the tabloid articles mostly rely on gossip and subjective writing and that is why it is very important for the article to have an interesting or ambiguous headline. This paper will try to further explain intertextuality and its origins in the theoretical part, as well as intertextual use in the headlines which are connected to sports and particularly connected to American and English football. This paper will also provide an interpretation of several articles from famous tabloid magazines such as The Sun from England and The New York Times from the United States. Since intertextuality is not always used alone in the headlines, but rather with other stylistic devices such as metaphor, metonymy, and others, this paper will also provide a table with stylistic devices and their frequency or infrequency in the headlines of the articles.

KEY WORDS: intertextuality, word picture, tabloids, headlines

Contents

1 Introduction 7
2 Tabloids 9
3 Methodology 10
4 Tabloid analysis 13
5 Conclusion 24
6 Bibliography 25

1 Introduction

Before defining the term 'intertextuality' and the topic of this paper, it is important to define the term 'discourse'. The term 'discourse' is hard to define because it has a lot of definitions and several meanings. However, Schiffrin, who contributed to narrative analysis and discourse analysis, exemplifies discourse and provides several different approaches in relation to discourse. In her book, called *Approaches to Discourse* (1994) she listed 6 linguistic approaches: speech theory, pragmatics, conversation analysis, ethnography, interactional sociolinguistics, and variation analysis. Furthermore, Danesi wrote the *Dictionary of Media and Communications* in which he defines discourse as a „use of language in communication“ and a „particular style of talking and writing“ (98). Ultimately, following Schiffrin's and Danesi's approaches, discourse can be understood as a study of written and spoken language in use.

The first time that the term 'intertextuality' is used was in 1967 when Julia Kristiva used "the term inter-textuality in an article devoted to Bakhtin while asserting the filiation between Bakhtin’s dialogism and intertextuality" (Hilali). The term 'intertextuality' has several definitions and one of them is that intertextuality "addresses the ways in which a text is interwoven within cultural signifying practices" (Gjurgjan, *Types of Intertextuality*, 67). She also states that there are several types of intertextuality: "subversive, adaptive and transpositional, the first being characteristic of modernism and the second of postmodernism. Transpositional intertextuality is particularly significant for postcolonial studies since it addresses the problem of cultural dynamics between the centre (metropolis) and periphery, which redefines not only periphery but the centre as well." (Gjurgjan, *Types of Intertextuality*, 67). It can be observerd that intertextuality, same as discourse, has plenty of meanings because the term has a broad aspect of usage ranging from cultural differences to literary works. With that said, the definition for intertextuality in literature is "a sophisticated literary

device making use of a textual reference within some body of text, which reflects again the text used as a reference" (Literary Devices). The latter definition of the term 'intertextuality' suits the topic of this paper.

2 Tabloids

The word 'tabloid' originated in the late 1880s when the pharmaceutical company Burroughs Wellcome & Co. made compressed tablets and named them Tabloid. The word 'tabloid' soon started to apply to all sorts of small and compressed items. The term 'tabloid journalism' was coined in 1901. It was a name given to a paper with short stories written on a small paper. In the 1918 the word 'tabloid' was given as a name for a smaller sheet newspapers that contained short stories.

Tabloid dimensions are 432 by 279 mm and is commonly known in the UK as 'half the size of a broadsheet'. Topics covered in the tabloids are rarely serious. Topic that are covered in the tabloids are usually related to astrology, celebrity gossip and television. With the rise in popularity, tabloids are now also being written for one topic specifically such as junk food, sexual practices, healthy lifestyle and many others.

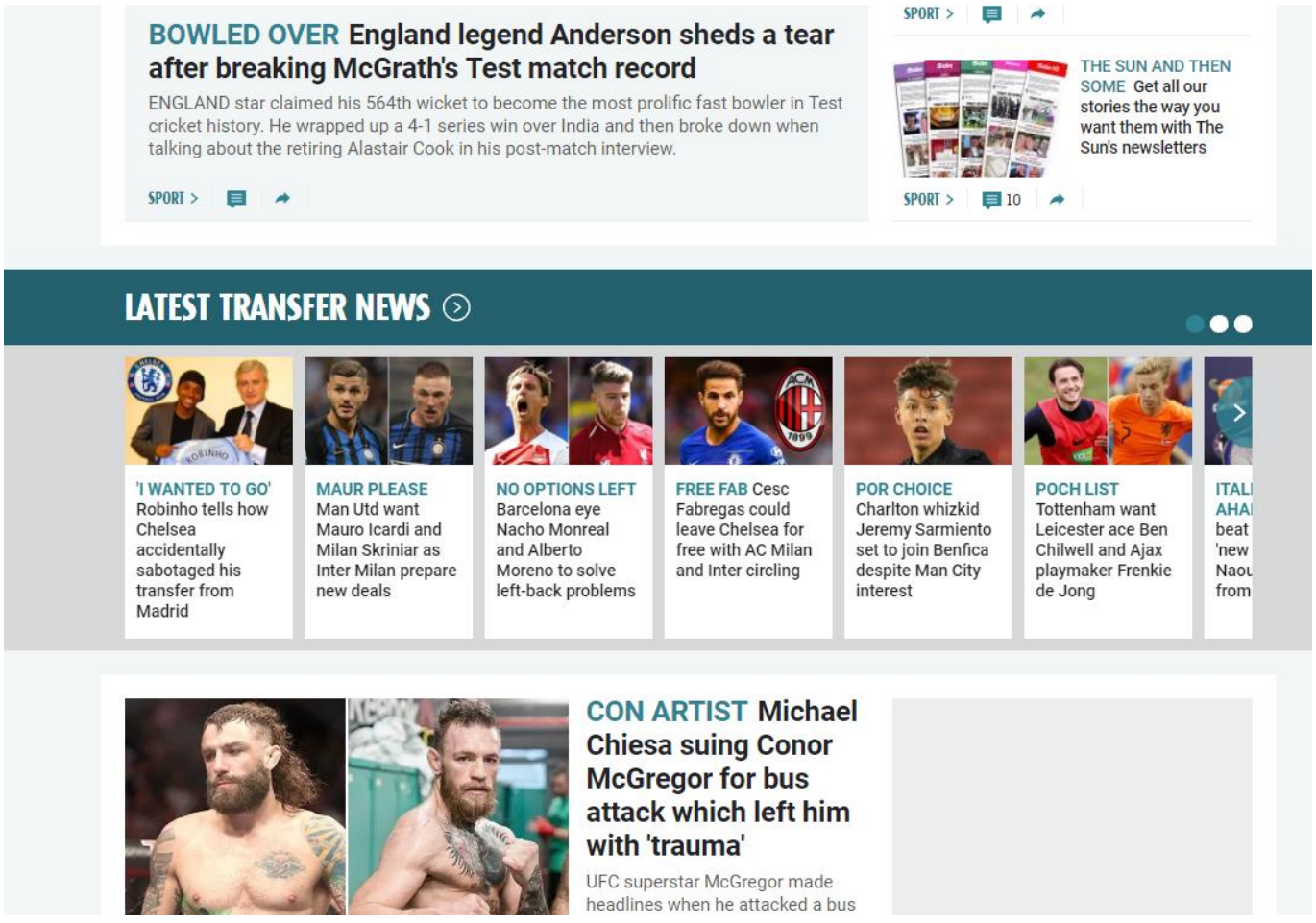
Some of the famous tabloids are: People, US Weekly, The Daily Star, The Daily Mirror, and OK! One of the most famous tabloid The Sun is being covered in this paper.



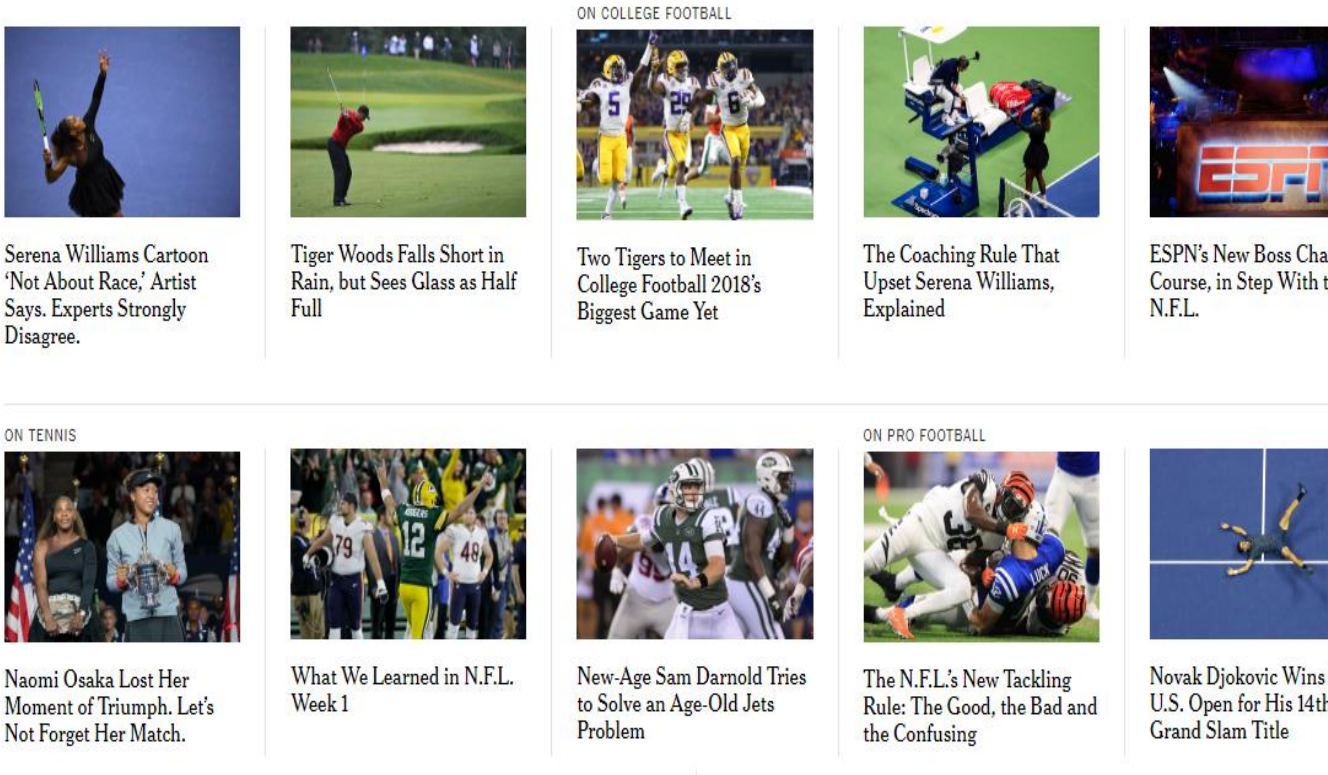
3 Methodology

Newspapers/tabloids used for this research are The New York Times and The Sun. Both of these two newspapers were read throughout February, March, and April of 2018. Intertextualty was noted in every fourth article on average in The New York Times, while it was noted in every third article on average in The Sun. Intertextuality is almost equally represented in every sport section in both of these newspapers. However, American football is the most famous sport in the USA, therefore being the most covered sport in the newspapers, as well as the one with the most intertextual references. This also applies to soccer and UK's The Sun. e.g. The most recent edition of The Sun and The New York Times:

The Sun



The New York Times



Even with the recent affair with Serena Williams, the N.F.L. is still the most covered sport in the US. The reason why these two sports are the perfect candidates for the research is because they are the most popular sports in the Europe and in the USA.

American tabloids	English tabloids
1 Metonymy	1 Wordplay - painful
2 Polysemy and Metonymy	2 Wordplay, intertextuality - Rage Against the Machine (band)
3 Metonymy	3 Wordplay - can't take it
4 Polysemy and Metonymy	4 Polysemy, intertextuality - movie Top Gun
5 Metonymy	5 Wordplay, intertextuality - 'Jur not for me' Jurgen Klopp and a song

The table above shows stylistic devices from the articles mentioned throughout the paper. In general, it can be observed that American tabloids tend to use polysemy and metonymy, while English tabloids tend to use word plays to make a witty headline. It was expected that most of the headlines will use figures such as alliteration and assonance because these figures are the ones that attract the readers the most: "Alliteration is when a sound is repeated. It is often used in poetry as well as newspapers. Newspapers use it to attract the eye and make it more memorable."(Language Devices and their Effects) and "Repetition is used to emphasise a certain point and usually makes a text more powerful" (Understanding Newspaper Language). However, judging from results, witty, clever and ambiguous headlines attract more readers than the headlines with repetition of letters.

4 Tabloid analysis

American tabloids on American football:

The Pro Football Hall of Fame Expansion Project Hits the Skids [1]

At first glance this article does not provide adequate amount of information for complete understanding. The term "skid" or its plural counterpart "skids" only reveals that it is "one of a group of objects (such as planks or logs) used to support or elevate a structure or object" (Merriam-Webster dictionary) or a Scottish punk rock and new wave band when talking about the plural. However, the idiom "hit the skids" provides the required information. It means that something is destined to fail. Without additional knowledge the reader does not know what this article is about, therefore this is a great example of intertextuality. Without reading the article and with possession of additional knowledge a reader knows what this article is going to be about, but the title does not provide the whole picture. The article, therefore, mostly relies on metonymy.

N.F.L. Ownerrs Unanimously Revamp Catch Rule, but There's a Catch[2]

The title of this article only reveals that there is a change regarding American football. Without additional knowledge in sports knowledge regarding idioms this title and even the article does not mean anything to a reader which will be discussed later on. However, the title of this article uses a word play with a word "catch" in order to achieve attention. To fully understand the title one must read the article and see for oneself why "There's a Catch". It can be observed from the following: "The new definition is similar in spirit to what was

[1] https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/28/sports/pro-football-hall-of-fame-canton-ohio.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fsports
[2] https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/27/sports/football/nfl-catch-rule.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fsports

previously on the books, but both the main rule and its attached notes were rewritten significantly in hopes of clarifying things for players, officials and fans. The terminology now states that a catch will have occurred if a player, who is in bounds [3]"

and even then, as stated before, the reader does not have complete knowledge because the reader must have additional knowledge in sports, especially in American football due to: "The new rule, which was approved by owners with a vote of 32-0, is an attempt to do away with the kinds of baroque rulings that nullified apparent catches by Calvin Johnson of the Detroit Lions in 2010, Dez Bryant of the Dallas Cowboys in 2014 and Jesse James of the Pittsburgh Steelers last season."

With all this said, the conclusion is that the article mostly relies on polysemy and metonymy

Tom Benson, Tycoon Who Danced With His Saints, Dies at 90[4]

The meaning of the title "Tom Benson, Tycoon Who Danced With His Saints, Dies at 90" is rather comprehensible. The title and the article talk about Tom Benson who died at 90. However, the part "Tycoon Who Danced With His Saints" is incomprehensible. Without further reading of article this part of the title makes no sense because "Danced With His Saints" could mean anything; it could be that he literally danced with saints or that part could have allegorical meaning. Upon reading the beginning of an article the reader finds out that

[3] (a) secures control of the ball in his hands or arms before the ball touches the ground; and

(b) touches the ground inbounds with both feet or with any part of his body other than his hands; and

(c) after (a) and (b) have been fulfilled, performs any act common to the game (e.g., tucks the ball away, extends it toward or over the goal line or the first-down line, takes an additional step, turns upfield, or avoids or wards off an opponent), or maintains control of the ball long enough to do so.",

[4] https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/15/obituaries/tom-benson-dead.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Ffootball

Tom Benson " owned the N.F.L.'s Saints". After reading the whole article it is revealed what "Danced With His Saints" actually means. The meaning is literal, however not literal as if he danced with religious saints. Literal in way that he danced after victory with his team – New Orleans Saints. "All the while, he remained a colorful figure, who delighted in dancing on the Superdome field with a gold and black parasol — the Saints' colors — to celebrate victories". This is an example of metonymy because 'his saints' are not some kind of a metaphorical expression, they are rather the team called The Saints.



Super Bowl Prediction: Patriots Have Edge Over 'Underdog's Eagles[5]

Underdog is "a person or group of people with less power, money, etc. than the rest of society"(Cambridge dictionary) and just by searching for the word 'underdog' in the dictionary, the reader understands what this article is going to be about. However, upon opening the article the reader can see a big picture of three Eagles' fans wearing Eagles' jerseys and dog masks. Just by reading the text under the picture in which is stated that "Fans of the Eagles have embraced the team's underdog status by wearing dog masks to games" and just by reading the beginning of the article which states that both fans and the players are

[5] https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/01/sports/super-bowl-prediction.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Ffootball

wearing masks in order to celebrate an underdog status, the reader gets an insight that fans are wearing dog masks because their team is considered as underog of the championship. Ultimately the wordplay can be found in the title of the article, but the text is still talking about the literal meaning of the word 'underdog'.This topic is also covered by The Washington Post and their "The Eagles want to be your dog, and they aren't masking their feelings about it" provides the reader with an insight in this craze for dog masks. These masks became so popular that for a while Eagles were mostly recognized for wearing the masks. They became so popular that the manufacturer said in an interview that they would produce and sell even more but they just don't have the time. –

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/early-lead/wp/2018/01/30/the-eagles-wanna-be-your-dog-and-arent-masking-their-feelings-about-it/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8b39f6491c85



Patriots End a Week of Hand-Wringing With Another A.F.C. Crown[6]

This title explains that Patriots won A.F.C. Crown, but "Week of Hand-Wringing" requires additional research to fully understand the title. 'Hand-wringing' is "The excessive display of concern or distress"(Oxford dictionary). Upon opening the article there is a big picture of Tom Brady holding his right hand while talking to a journalist. The text under the picture also reveals an information that Tom's hand was injured. In the first paragraph, it is revealed that "the injured right thumb of Patriots quarterback Tom Brady was all that sports fans here could

[6] https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/21/sports/new-england-patriots-super-bowl-lii.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Ffootball

talk about in the days before New England played the Jacksonville Jaguars for the A.F.C. championship on Sunday.". The third paragraph reveals that "Patriots fans need not have worried" for Tom's injury because they ultimately won. This quote from the third paragraph perfectly illustrates 'Hand-wringing' phrase. This additional piece of information provides meaning to the earlier vague title. With the understanding of the phrase 'Hand-Wringing' and upon reading the article, the reader comes to conclusion that the title is actually a wordplay on Tom's injury.

English tabloid on football:

SPAINFUL[7]

Spain World Cup 2018 squad shock as Chelsea pair Alvaro Morata and Cesc Fabregas axed from 23-man party

The title of the article is Spainful. Just by looking at the title, most of the readers can get an insight what this article is about. However, for those who don't understand the meaning, the title is a lexical bland consisted of words Spain and painful. Those words have different meanings on their own and the title should have been something like "Something painful happened in Spain", but since these two words can be joined into one without any other changes due to fact that both of these words have word 'pain' in it. The author did a great job because he achieved to get reader's attention with the reduction of words and word play. After the title has been clarified, it is still vague which kind of pain happened in Spain. Since this article is found in the 'The Sun' tabloid under Sports section one can know that something

[7] https://www.thesun.co.uk/world-cup-2018/6339451/spain-world-cup-2018-squad-alvaro-morata-cesc-fabregas/

painful happened regarding Spain's sport, but without fully reading the article the reader does not know the meaning of the title. Upon reading the article, the reader finds out that the painful thing is actually the fact that some of the best and the most famous players got rejected for participating in the upcoming World Cup. This act is so painful because these players were nation's favourite players, but Spain's manager Lopetegui said: "A World Cup is the most beautiful and toughest competition ever. We have decided that this list is the one that will help us the most. It is difficult, but above the names is the illusion of a country".

The headline, therefore simoultaneously relies on both blending as a word formation process, and polysemy of the blended components for effect.

RADJ AGAINST THE MACHINE[8]

Belgian World Cup squad shock as Roberto Martinez axes Roma star Radja Nainggolan from 28-man group

The article of the article is 'RADJ AGAINST THE MACHINE' which to a reader with no addition knowledge does not mean anything. However, upon researching this title, the reader will come to the conclusion that there was a band called 'Rage against the machine'. However, it still does not make any sense since this article is found in the sport section of the tabloid. The author achieved to get the reader's attention with a word play in the title where here substituted a word 'rage' with a word 'Radj' which sounds a lot like the word from the original name. The vagueness of the title also plays a part in getting the reader's attention. Upon reading the article, the reader will come to a conclusion that 'Radj' is actually a name. More specific, it is a name of a Belgian football player whose name is Radja Nainggolan. After

[8] https://www.thesun.co.uk/world-cup-2018/6338791/belgian-world-cup-roberto-martinez-radja-nainggolan/

completing the article, the reader will realize that Nainggolan got rejected from Belgian squad for the upcoming World Cup in Russia. He is a fan favourite player and many people in Belgium think that he is supposed to play in Russia. Addition to that, a lot of people also think that he is better than most of the players who play at the same position as he does. Ultimately, the title is fitting because the Belgian football team and their coach could be perceived as a metaphorical'machine', while all of the unhappy fans and football experts could be subsumed under the metonymic sense of 'rage'. Statements in which dissatisfaction is shown :

"No Radja in the World Cup. This is probably the worst decision you can do Roberto. #WorldCup #Nainggolan #REDTOGETHER"

"You're gonna pick Tielemans, Witsel, and Januzaj over Radja ? #WorldCup #REDTOGETHER #Nainggolan"

As stated before, this is a word play on the band 'Rage Against the Machine' and therefore is a great example of intertextuality because it requires knowledge in areas other than football.



CONT TAKE IT[9]

Willian wants to quit Chelsea if Antonio Conte stays this summer – with Manchester United eyeing deal

The title of this article is 'Cont take it' which can remind the reader of the song by The Lemonheads or a common phrase "I can't take it anymore". The title to the reader does not provide much information. Just by looking at the title, the reader can conclude that the word 'cont' in the title is just typo. Typo or not, together with vagueness, this title lures the reader to read it because it is impossible to decipher what the article talks about. Upon reading the article, the reader will conclude that the article is about Chelsea's player Willian and Chelsea's coach Antonio Conte. The article says that Willian will leave Chelsea if Conte stays in the club. Therefore, the reader will conclude that the title is not actually a typo, it is rather a reference to a common phrase and also a word play on the Chealsea's coach surname. This play on words is a perfect example of homophones which are "words having the same pronunciation but different meanings, origins, or spelling." (Oxford Living Dictionaries).



[9] https://www.thesun.co.uk/sport/football/6339531/willian-news-chelsea-antonio-conte-manchester-united/

TOP GUN[10]

England ace Raheem Sterling shows off new leg tattoo as he prepares for World Cup in Russia

The title of the article is 'Top Gun' which does not make any sense when correlating the title with the football. Upon reading the article, the reader comes to a conclusion that the title is somehow related to Raheem Sterling's new tattoo – rifle on his leg. However, this does not reveal much information without the reader's additional knowledge and insight in intertextuality. If the reader has any additional knowledge, the reader will come to a conclusion that the author made a word play on a title in a few ways. The first thing on which he made a word play is regarding his legs. If the reader has an additional knowledge, the reader will know that if anyone talks about guns in a metaphorical way regarding football, they would talk about footballer's legs, which can be found in an article written by Chris Wright. The article says the following regarding Aguero's legs : "He may be only ‘ickle, but Kun’s downstairs guns are mammoth in relative terms…". The second thing is that the author made a connection between his tattoo and the term 'top gun'. This means that his tattoo and his right leg mean one word – 'gun'. The word 'top' is related to a fact that he is one of the Manchester City's best goal scorers. The last word play that the author did is relating the title to a title of the movie called 'Top Gun'. The movie does not have any specific relation to a football, but it served as a nice instrument to attract the readers because it is a well known film. To conclude, the title is a great title for this article even though it does not have any connections to a football, but rather because it served as a perfect word play in this context.

[10] https://www.thesun.co.uk/uncategorized/6395627/england-raheem-sterling-new-tattoo-world-cup/



https://www.thesun.co.uk/uncategorized/6395627/england-raheem-sterling-new-tattoo-world-cup/

http://www.whoateallthepies.tv/lists/182571/15-footballers-with-impressively-monstrous-thighs-photos.html

JUR NOT FOR ME[11]

Liverpool ‘have no interest in signing Adrien Rabiot’ with PSG star still to sign a new deal with French champs

The title of this article is 'Jur not for me' which on the first glance does not have any specific meaning. One could presume that the word 'jur' stands for 'you are'. Upon opening the article, the reader finds out that the article is about English football club Liverpool having no interest in signing Adrien Rabiot from Paris Saint-Germain. Without further reading it is still unclear to the reader what is with the title. After reading the complete article, the reader finds two sentences which will elucidate the meaning of the headline. "The Liverpool Echo reports that Liverpool are "baffled by such stories", and that boss Jurgen Klopp has had "no conversations with the France international in private or otherwise"." and "Jurgen Klopp is a long-term admirer of Rabiot - but has so far distanced himself from any reported bids" explains that the term 'Jur' is actually a reference to the name of Liverpool's coach Jurgen Klopp. This article is a great representation of wordplay with a name and also a great example of intertextuality. If the reader looks even further, the reader will find out that it could also be a reference to a song 'You're not right for me' by Emilia Mitiku.



[11] https://www.thesun.co.uk/sport/football/7207641/liverpool-transfer-news-adrien-rabiot-psg-paris-saint-germain/

5 Conclusion

The main purpose of this paper was to explicate intertextuality in sport articles, but it also examined which kind of headlines attract the readers' attention the most and it also examined stylistic figures that are compatible with intertextuality.

However, it also aimed at a comparison between broadsheets and tabloids; When touching upon American broadsheets such as The New York Times, polysemy and metonymy are more expressed that the witty word plays. Intertextuality was specifically implemented to attract the reader's attention. The American broadsheets are filled with text and a couple of pictures. However, English tabloids such as The Sun consist only a few lines of text and plenty of pictures. The Sun's headlines are mostly funny wordplays with references to movies, songs, and personal names, but at the first glance they are not so obvious and they indeed attract the reader's attention.

The paper also points out that chosen articles from The New York Times tend to use more lexical resources such as idioms, whereas the articles from The Sun employ more references to pop culture. e.g. *TOP GUN* and RADJ *AGAINST THE MACHINE*

It is hard to measure which headline will attract the most attention because understanding the intertextuality and references in the title is mostly subjective and therefore the authors must take into the consideration their targeted age, gender, area etc. if they want to write a successful article.

6 Bibliography

Alysham High School, *Language Devices and their Effects, available at http://www.aylshamhigh.com/downloads/language-devices-and-their-effects-final-version-complete-dec-2015.pdf*, accessed on September 20 2018

Hilali, Asma. *History of the concept of Intertextuality. With an example of a North African novel*, available at https://www.scm.unihalle.de/reporting_list/study_days/sektion1/2303715_2303910/, accessed on September 20 2018

Ljiljana Ina Gjurgjan. 2008 Types of intertextuality. Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagrabiensia (0039-3339) 53; 67-85

nderstanding Newspaper Language, - https://www.londonschool.com/blog/understanding-newspaper-language/

https://www.thesun.co.uk/sport/

https://www.nytimes.com/section/sports