

# PhD defense Yana R. Avramova - Faculty of Applied Economics

## “Brands in books: the effects of brand placement in written narratives.”

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**Date:** 9 March 2017

**Venue:** University of Antwerp, Promotiezaal Grauwzusters - Lange Sint-Annastraat 7 - 2000 Antwerp (route: UAntwerpen, Stadscampus)

**Time:** 4:30 PM

**PhD candidate:** Yana R. Avramova

**Principal investigator:** Prof. Nathalie Dens

**Co-principal investigator:** Prof. Patrick De Pelsmacker

**Short description:** PhD defense Yana R. Avramova - Faculty of Applied Economics

### **Abstract**

There are a number of indications that brand placement – the purposeful incorporation of brands into editorial content, which has been traditionally associated with film and TV, and more recently with video and computer games, song lyrics, and music videos – is rapidly gaining ground in the realm of books. And yet, academic research on this how brand placement in fiction affects consumers is still very scarce. To narrow the gap in current knowledge, this dissertation systematically investigates brand placement effects in fictional narratives.

Past research, mainly using other media, has identified placement prominence (i.e., the degree to which a brand is vivid and attention-grabbing) as one key determinant of brand placement effectiveness, but the extant evidence has been inconsistent. Therefore, this dissertation investigates if two key placement execution characteristics – placement frequency and placement modality – that have been shown to affect prominence in audiovisual media, exhibit similar effects in the context of fictional narratives. Placement frequency refers to the number of brand mentions in the text. Placement modality pertains to whether the brand appears in the narration, or the dialogue of the story. Moreover, it studies whether these placement factors interact with brand-related (i.e., brand familiarity), text-related (i.e., text language), and reader-related variables (i.e., level of transportation into the story; individual differences in need for cognition), which have been shown to influence processing style, to ultimately influence brand attitude. Finally, the influence of these factors across two different media, namely text and film, are directly compared.

The dissertation reports the results of five experiments that systematically manipulated some of these factors and measured others. Participants were university students and (non-student) volunteers recruited through a professional online panel agency. They were randomly assigned to experimental conditions and filled in the questionnaires on paper or online. Across studies, conditions that facilitated deeper elaboration of the text and/or placements were generally associated with stronger negative effects of exposure to prominent (vs. subtle) placements on brand evaluation. In contrast, whenever conditions favored less extensive processing (or a different type of processing, such as narrative elaboration), high placement prominence either had a positive effect, or did not affect brand attitude. The findings highlight the need to consider the impact of other factors – both situational and individual – besides prominence both in theorizing on brand placement effectiveness, and in implementing actual brand integrations in a fictional text.