

ISSA Proceedings 2014 ~ The Argumentative Relevance Of Rhetorical Strategies In Movie Trailers

Abstract: Movie trailers are hybrid (combining narrative and advertising) audiovisual discourse genres that exploit a carefully selected re-montage of moving and still images, sound, music, voice-over, intertitles, etc. to persuade potential spectators/consumers that a forthcoming movie is worth watching. I hypothesize that movie trailers reach their goal by advancing monomodal (e.g. only pictorial or only verbal) and multimodal arguments and by employing monomodal and multimodal rhetorical schemas and tropes (e.g. metonymy and synecdoche).

Keywords: dispositio, elocutio, inventio, loci, movie trailers, metonymy, multimodal argumentation, multimodality, synecdoche.

1. Introduction

This is an exploratory study which looks at movie trailers as discourse genres from a rhetorical and argumentative point of view.

With this study, I wish to contribute to the research on visual/multimodal argumentation and the research on the relationship and isomorphism between rhetorical figures/tropes and argumentative *topoi* (or *loci*). On the one hand, the study on visual/multimodal argumentation has flourished since a special issue of *Argumentation and Advocacy* came out in 1996. This year marks a shift in the studies on argumentation: since then, scholars have become more and more aware of the fact that real argumentative discourses in real contexts do not convey arguments only verbally but exploit all the semiotic resources available to make their point and to persuade people. On the other hand, the study of the link between patterns of *elocutio* from *ornatus* (i.e. rhetorical figures and tropes) and patterns of *inventio* (i.e. argumentative loci) is not completely new. The author of the website *Silva Rhetoricae* puts into question the sharp division between tropes and *topoi*:

The difference between a figure and a topic of invention, then, may sometimes simply be a matter of degree, or it may be a matter of whether one views the

strategy as one of expression of an idea (an issue of style) or the composition or discovery of an idea or argument (an issue of invention). The point is, we should recognize the close proximity of the figures and the topics of invention.

In order to understand the role of rhetorical figures/tropes, Fanhestock (1999, p. 23) suggests “shift[ing] the emphasis from what the figures are to what it is they do particularly well”, that is “epitomize lines of reasoning.” Also, Tindale (2004) says that figures are arguments if they engage the audience in a premise-conclusion process. More recently, Kjeldsen (2012) has investigated how tropes contribute to the inferential reconstruction of enthymemes in advertisements. He argues that pictorial rhetorical figures delimit the interpretation of the message of an advertisement and evoke the intended argument. I have tried to contribute to this line of research in Pollaroli and Rocci (forthcoming).

Movie trailers are an interesting discourse genre to be explored because of their multimodal and hybrid nature. Unfortunately, they have hardly ever raised scientific interest, as Carmen Maier (2011) complains about. Movie trailers are multimodal discourse genres because they combine meaning manifested through different semiotic modes such as moving and still images, sound, music, written and spoken language. As Dornaletche Ruiz (2007) says, movie trailers are shows of other shows, they are audiovisual discourses anticipating and promoting other audiovisual discourses. Indeed, movie trailers are communicative practices that employ the same semiotic modes (and often the same media, especially when they are broadcast in cinemas) of the communicative practices they promote.

Movie trailers are hybrid because they combine the narrative nature of the movie they are constructed upon and the promotional nature of advertising; as Maier (2011, p. 141) says “trailers are designed to sell and tell a story.” The goal of movie trailers is to persuade potential consumers/spectators that a forthcoming movie is worth watching (Dusi, 2002; Kernan, 2004; Dornaletche Ruiz, 2007, 2009; Maier, 2009, 2011). For this, they can be considered as a type of advertising, especially as a type of TV commercials (Dornaletche Ruiz, 2007). The product is a movie, specifically it is a movie experience; in fact, one cannot properly ‘buy a movie’ as if it was a pair of shoes, but can go to the movies and watch it. In order to reach their advertising goal, movie trailers have to both give some information on the forthcoming movie to arouse the prospective consumer/spectator’s interest and leave out some other information to encourage the audience to go and watch the movie in the case they are interested in the

story (or other features of the movie) and wish to know more about it. As Dornaletche Ruiz (2007, p. 102) says, the marketing strategy of movie trailers is similar to those types of marketing (known as merchandising) that tempt the audience by offering an anticipation of the product (e.g. pieces of a new brand of cheese at the supermarket, free trails on websites that teach languages, demo of videogames sold with magazines) in order to 'whet the appetite' of the consumer. Movie trailers are appetizers of coming attractions (Kernan, 2004). In this study I wish to explore the hypotheses that:

1. Movie trailers are argumentative activity types;
2. Movie trailers employ multimodal arguments to fulfil their promotional goal;
3. Movie trailers employ multimodal rhetorical patterns from *ornatus* (e.g. synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, ellipsis);
4. The rhetorical patterns employed are argumentatively relevant, that is, they make the audience infer the arguments advanced in support of the standpoint put forward in the movie trailer.

This study does not present final results but only some preliminary results of a path of research that should be further developed.

2. *Movie trailers are argumentative discourses*

So far movie trailers have not been studied as argumentative discourses; yet, the persuasive purpose of film trailers is acknowledged among those few scholars that have written about them (Dusi, 2002; Kernan, 2004; Dornaletche Ruiz, 2007, 2009; Maier, 2009, 2011).

Following Rigotti and Rocci's (2006) model for communication contexts, movie trailers can be described as communicative activities which result from the application of the advertising interaction scheme - namely a culturally shared scheme of interaction which helps in achieving a goal - to the interaction field - namely the institutional reality defined by shared goals and commitments - of the market of movies. Broadly speaking, the goal of the people working in the market of movies is the positioning of a movie in the film market (Dornaletche Ruiz, 2007, p. 100) in order for it to perform well at the box office in theatres. The goal of movie production companies is achieved only when spectators go and watch the movie in theatres; their goal will not be satisfied if spectators limit themselves in receiving the information provided in the trailer. Movie trailers are argumentative as advertisements are. Arguing that movie trailers are argumentative discourses because they are a specific type of advertising may not

be easily accepted, especially among scholars who do not believe that advertisements can argue (see Blair, 1996, 2004). However, other scholars provide good reasons for claiming that advertisements argue (Pateman, 1980; Slade, 2002, 2003; Atkin & Richardson, 2005; Ripley, 2008; Rocci, 2008, 2009; van den Hoven, 2012; Kjeldsen, 2012; Mazzali-Lurati & Pollaroli 2014; Rocci, Mazzali-Lurati & Pollaroli, 2013; Wierda & Visser, 2013; Pollaroli & Rocci, forthcoming). The following quotation from Atkin and Richardson (2005, p. 167) clearly summarizes the position of these scholars:

Advertising discourse [is] per se argumentative given that advertising offers evidence - often implicit, indirect or semiotic support in addition to (largely non-requisite) premises - in defence of a contested or contestable position.

Ripley (2008) shows that advertising can be seen as argumentative from the perspective of different argumentation theories. Advertising for products, for instance, is, from a pragma-dialectical point of view, a single non-mixed difference of opinion (see van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Snoeck Henkemans, 2002; Wierda & Visser, 2013). Following this perspective, movie trailers can be seen as single non-mixed differences of opinion between a movie production company (the protagonist) and potential consumers/spectators (the antagonist). The standpoint often remains implicit, but it can be easily reconstructed from the context and verbalized as *Movie X is worth watching in the theatre* or *You should watch movie X in the theatre*. Moreover, it is often the case that the arguments are enthymematic and implicit, but the context and the recognizable overall purpose of the discourse make it possible to make them explicit and reconstruct the whole discourse as argumentative.

In order to fulfil their promotional goal, movie trailers advance arguments employing either the verbal, visual, or aural semiotic systems or a combination of them, that is they advance arguments multimodally. Although the scepticism about multimodal argumentation persists (Johnson, 2003; Blair, 1996, 2004; Jacobs, 2000), more and more scholars in argumentation theory claim that pictures, odours, sounds, moving images, etc. provide arguments in support of claims (Alcolea Banegas, 2009; Groarke, 2009; Kjeldsen, 2012; Dove, 2012; van den Hoven, 2012; Pollaroli & Rocci, forthcoming). For these scholars the argumentative role of discourse elements is independent from their manifestation in the verbal mode. The audience of multimodal argumentative discourses is able to recognize arguments manifested in other semiotic systems rather than the

verbal one and to understand and correctly interpret the communicated message without translating it into words. Yet, analysts interested in the reconstruction of the claim(s) and argument(s) of multimodal argumentative discourses need to translate visual/aural/multimodal arguments into words; this may result in the loss of part of the original meaning. Seeing visual/aural/multimodal arguments as enthymemes may be a good starting point. Some scholars (Birdsell & Groarke, 1996, p. 6; Smith, 2007; Kjeldsen, 2007, 2012) claim that images can be enthymemes, that is rhetorical syllogisms that need the active participation of the audience to be completed with contextual-bound premises. The effectiveness of enthymemes relies on these contextual premises. Kjeldsen (2012, p. 241) sees images as “offer[ing] a rhetorical enthymematic process in which something is condensed or omitted, and, as a consequence, it is up to the spectator to provide the unspoken premises”.

3. Inventio and disposition in movie trailers

Movie trailers are composed of a carefully selected re-montage of dialogues, moving images, sounds, and music from the movie they promote and arrange them together with non-diegetic voice-over, shots and scenes created for the trailer only or original shots that were not included in the final editing of the movie, shots with information about the actors, the director, the production company, day of release, prizes that the movie has been awarded, empty black or white shots etc.

All this makes movie trailers something completely different from summaries of movies. The chronological structure of a movie is transformed into the mainly non-chronological structure of a trailer. Dornaletche Ruiz (2007, p. 105) says that trailers may be constituted of ‘bracket syntagmas’ (Metz, 1989; Bateman, 2007) of the story that is told in the coming movie. Bracket syntagmas are shots put together because they represent examples of a reality, a topic, without chronological order and temporal link.

Maier (2009, p. 162) points out that consumers/spectators “evaluate” the characters, the relationships, the events, the film company, the actors, the director presented in the movie trailer, and consequently the movie advertised, visually. In fact, Maier defines “evaluative devices as being those verbal, visual and aural resources that inherently or contextually signal a process of appraisal” (2009, p. 165); thus, her concept of ‘evaluation’ is similar to ‘argumentation’. In my view, these are all diegetic and extra-diegetic visual (or multimodal)

arguments. Examples of promotional evaluative devices in movie trailers are, for Maier (2009), the film company's logo which "not only reminds the viewer of the company's prestige, it may also be an indication of the quality or type of films created by the company" (p. 171) and the name of an actor, which has a similar effect to that of the film company's logo. Maier (2009, p. 172) also points out that "no single semiotic mode is supposed to carry the whole or only evaluative information of a shot or scene. Visual, verbal and aural evaluative devices are co-deployed to maintain or subvert each others' evaluative load both on the diegetic and non-diegetic levels." These evaluative devices may be seen as the recurrent patterns of *inventio* that are employed in movie trailers.

How do these elements hold together in movie trailers as discourses? As Carmen Maier (2009, p. 161) points out "the whole structure of these film trailers is motivated by their promotional purpose." This insightful remark can be better explained adopting the pragma-rhetorical perspective on discourses that Congruity Theory has developed (Rigotti, 2005; Rocci, 2005; see the literature cited in Mazzali-Lurati & Pollaroli, 2014). Following Congruity Theory, we see monomodal/multimodal discourses as complex acts governed by a superordinate act that corresponds to what the addresser does to the addressee with the discourse; all discourse elements are subordinate acts that contribute to fulfil the goal of the text as a whole. The promotional goal of movie trailers determines the complex multimodal act of the text - which is similar to that of advertising for product - and the functions fulfilled by the multimodal sequences of the movie trailer are subordinate to the advertising one. Multimodal sequences in audiovisual discourses are clusters of shots combined together with sound, music and other elements that form a unit; in order to determine the boundaries of each sequence we must look at changes in music, sound, images, etc. The voiceover may help in marking the multimodal sequences. I agree with Carmen Maier pointing out that all stages - or multimodal sequences - fulfil a 'promotional' function "through different informative means" (p. 144). From the perspective of Congruity Theory, the promotional function corresponds to the complex superordinate act whereas the informative means correspond to the subordinate acts.

In other words, movie trailers are multimodal argumentative discourses that perform the complex act that, for the purpose of this paper, we can name 'the movie trailer act'. All multimodal subordinate units concur in performing the high-

level act. Maier (2009) identifies different stages that fulfil specific functions in movie trailers. We will see some of them through the analysis of an example in Section 5.

Movie trailer act

(Addresser, Addressee, T)

Presupposition

Addresser is a motion picture company that produced movie X;

Addressee is a potential consumer/spectator;

T is a movie trailer having a propositional content Y which shows the movie story and other information about the movie.

Movie X will be available at time t. Addresser reasonably believes that movie X will satisfy a desire of Addressee.

Pragmatic effect

By stating T, Addresser commits himself in offering movie X and expresses the desire that

Addressee benefits from movie X.

The complex act determines the inferential process that the audience is invited to perform in order to correctly understand and interpret each multimodal sequence of a movie trailer. The meaning in movie trailers is condensed (Wildfeuer, 2014; see also Kjeldsen, 2012 and the enthymematic nature of visual/multimodal argumentation mentioned in Section 1) and the way multimodal sequences are arranged may seem incoherent and chaotic because, for instance, information about the production company is followed with brief shots from the movie and this is interrupted by information about the actors, etc. Indeed, Wildfeuer (2014) notes that the inferential work required by viewers in order to interpret a trailer is different from the inferential work they operate to interpret a movie. This is consistent, from a Congruity Theory perspective, with the very different superordinate complex acts that movie trailers and movies perform, respectively a promotional goal and an entertainment goal. [i] However, a link between the inferential work performed when watching a movie trailer and the process of interpretation of the promoted movie remains. Indeed, a movie trailers invites the audience to operate anticipatory hypotheses (Moeschler & Reboul, 2009) on the cinematic discourse that we are invited to watch in theatres.

4. *Elocutio in movie trailers*

Movie trailers employ patterns from *elocutio*, such as synecdoche, metonymies, hyperbole[**ii**], ellipsis (here I will focus only on metonymy and synecdoche for reasons of space).

In the last few decades, cognitive linguists have shown that traditional rhetorical figures and tropes are deep and pervasive structures of our thoughts through which people conceptualize and understand the world (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003[1980]; Barcelona, 2003; Ortony, 1993; Panther & Radden, 1999). Lakoff and Johnson (2003 [1980], p. 5), for instance, claim that “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”. Stemming from this approach to metaphor, Forceville (1996) shows that the manifestation of a metaphor is not necessarily verbal but it can also be pictorial and multimodal: metaphors can be manifested by images and by a combination of different semiotic modes such as words and images, sound, moving images, etc. (see contributions in Forceville & Urios-Aparisi, 2009).

Metonymy is a substitution of one concept with another which plays a contiguous semantic role within the same frame (Bohnomme, 2005). The focus shifts from the proper concept and role to the substituted one. Metonymic concepts “usually involve[s] direct physical or causal associations” which are systematic and “grounded in our experience”. Indeed, it is possible to identify “certain general metonymic concepts in term of which we organize our thoughts and actions”; for example, the relations “producer for product”, “object used for user”, “controller for controlled”, “institution for people responsible”, “place for the institution” and “place for the event” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003 [1980], p. 39). Consider, for example, the sentence *She’s wearing an Armani* in which the producer substitutes the product, or a TV commercial of a brand of water where the mountains from which the water springs are shown (metonymy of the origin-for-product type). Works on pictorial and multimodal metonymy (Forceville, 2009; Bonhomme & Lugrin, 2008; Urios-Aparisi, 2009; Yu, 2009; Villacañas & White, 2013; see also Forceville 1996) identify instances of metonymic relationships represented by visual elements in static or dynamic images in advertising texts.

Since Antiquity synecdoche has been recognized as a rhetorical figure independent from metonymy. Yet, already Quintilian noticed the little difference that exists between the two rhetorical tropes and that “it is but a short step between synecdoche and metonymy” (*Institutio Oratoria* VIII.VI.23). Burkhardt

(2010, p. 247) laments that “a clear principle for the distinction between metonymy and synecdoche, which is more than 2,000 years old, is still missing”. Nerlich (2010) agrees and points out that it is a hard task to give a definite and agreed upon definition of synecdoche as well as to find its position in the realm of rhetorical figures. The distinction has been made even harder as synecdoche has been sometimes considered as a subtype of metonymy (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003 [1980]). For space reason, I cannot report all the characterizations and classifications that have been proposed on synecdoche, but I can plausibly claim that synecdoche is a structure of thought that substitutes the part for the whole (*There where only ten heads today in the classroom*) or the genus for the species (*He has a temperature*), the singular for the plural (*The Roman won the battle*), and vice versa.

Some research has been conducted on the manifestation of rhetorical patterns in audiovisuals, especially in movies and in TV commercials (Whittock, 1990; Forceville, 2007, 2009; Urios-Aparisi, 2009; Yu, 2009). Whittock (1990) lists nine ‘cinematic metaphors’ that include metonymy, synecdoche, explicit comparison and distortion. Forceville (2007) claims that metaphor can be manifested multimodally in TV commercials and metonymy (Forceville, 2009) is employed in movies when, for example, the spectator hears a sound that is connected with something that is not displayed on the screen (e.g. the creaking floorboards that stand for an unwelcome visitor) or the spectator watches a close-up of a part of the body (e.g. moving mouth) that stands for an action (e.g. talking). It follows that movie trailers as well may manifest rhetorical patterns such as synecdoche – parts of the movie stand for the whole movie – and metonymy – the director and the film production industry stand for the movie.

I hypothesize that these rhetorical patterns epitomize lines of reasoning, saying it with Fanhestock (1999), and make the viewer infer the intended argument, saying it with Kjeldsen (2012). For example a metonymy condenses an argument based on a locus from final cause or efficient cause and a synecdoche condenses an argument based on a locus from parts to whole.

5. *A case study*

In this section I will analyze a movie trailer that won the 15th Golden Trailer Awards for the ‘best in show’ trailer. It promotes the movie *Gravity* (2013) by Alfonso Cuarón.

00:01 - 00:04		Warner Bros Pictures logo	MS1 Promotional - Identification
00:05 - 01:36		Diegetic sequence	MS2 Promotional - Orientation and Complication
01:37 - 01:39		Title of the movie	MS3 Promotional - Identification/Specification
01:40 - 01:42		Main actors	MS4 Promotional - Identification
01:43 - 01:45		Director	MS5 Promotional - Identification
01:46 - 01:49		Date of release in theatres	MS6 Promotional - Information/Specification
01:50 - 01:51		other details	MS7 Promotional - Identification

Table 1

This movie trailer is a one-minute 51 seconds audiovisual discourse composed of 7 multimodal sequences. A preliminary step for the analysis of audiovisuals is the transcription of the discourse into the written modes. The transcription is useful because it gives a synthetic representation of the linearity and strata of the audiovisual text (Casetti & Di Chio, 2009). The transcription table proposed here (table 1) is a simplified version of the transcription table presented in Rocci, Mazzali-Lurati & Pollaroli (2013) constructed on the basis of Baldry & Thibault (2006), Bateman (2007), and Casetti & Di Chio (2009).

The movie trailer for *Gravity* is composed of multimodal sequences that fulfil specific functions in the trailer (Maier, 2011) and concur to perform the overall promotional act of the discourse. Combining Maier's functions and Congruity Theory, we can identify the act performed by each multimodal sequence.

The multimodal sequence 1, which lasts 4 seconds, shows the Warner Bros Pictures logo and accomplish what Maier (2011) calls the Promotional Identification function because gives non-diegetic information about the film company. The multimodal sequence 2 is diegetic and is composed of only one shot, that is one uninterrupted image, without editing cuts but with many frames. It lasts 1 minute 31 seconds and it shows an entire scene from the movie advertised. This multimodal sequence functions both as Orientation and as a Complication (always following Maier's stages) because it introduces the characters and the situation and also what seems to be the disruptive event. The audience watches three astronauts working outside of the space shuttle Explorer. The mission control in Houston warns the team about debris in the space which do not last much in arriving. One of the astronauts is hit and seems dead, the astronaut Stone cannot unbuckle the belt that keeps her tied to the shuttle arm; while the astronaut Kowalski is trying to help Dr. Stone, the shuttle arm is broken by some debris and she starts tumbling through space. The spectator watching this sequence operates many inferences and anticipatory hypotheses (Moeschler & Reboul, 2009) about the plot and the chronological order of the events (is this the beginning of the movie or the end? What is the reason for the accident and

the debris being around the Earth?) and the characters (Are those the only characters? How is the relationship between them? What happens to Dr. Stone after she is thrown away from the space shuttle?). The following multimodal sequences give extra-diegetic information.

Multimodal sequence 3 identifies the title of the movie thus specifying one of the elements presupposed in the 'movie trailer act' we have seen in Section 2. Multimodal sequence 4 identifies the famous actors playing the two characters the audience has just seen in multimodal sequence 2. The multimodal sequence 5 identifies the director. The multimodal sequence 6 gives information of the date of release in theatres and specifies a detail of the 'movie trailer act'. Multimodal sequences 1 to 6 are composed of one shot each. Two shots compose MS7 in which some information is repeated (director, film company, actors) and some information is added about the music and the production. The overall act performed in this movie trailer is:

Movie trailer act Gravity
(Addresser, Addressee, T)

Presupposition:

Warner Bros Pictures is a motion picture company that produced *Gravity*; Addressee is a potential consumer/spectator; T is a movie trailer having a propositional content Y which shows the movie story and other information about the movie. *Gravity* will be available on 10.04.2013. Warner Bros Pictures reasonably believes that *Gravity* will satisfy a desire of Addressee.

Pragmatic effect:

By stating T, Warner Bros Pictures commits himself in offering *Gravity* and expresses the desire that Addressee benefits from *Gravity*.

A reconstruction of the standpoint and the arguments following the pragma-dialectical analytical overview shows that the movie trailer benefits from a complex argumentative structure in which subordinate argumentation combines with multiple argumentation (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, 2004; van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Snoeck Henkemans, 2002).

1. You should watch *Gravity* (which will be released in theatres on 10.04.2013)
 - 1.1 The movie *Gravity* is entertaining
 - 1.1.1 The multimodal sequences (parts) that you are watching in the movie trailer

are entertaining

1.2 *Gravity* is good (is a movie of high quality)

1.2.1 Sandra Bullock and George Clooney are starring

1.2.2 *Gravity* is directed by Alfonso Cuarón

1.2.3 *Gravity* is produced by Warner Bros. Pictures

The analytical overview shows that single aspects, or ‘parts’, of the movie are presented as details of quality; the quality of the parts of the movie is transferred to the movie as a whole and are presented as reasons for making *Gravity* worth watching.

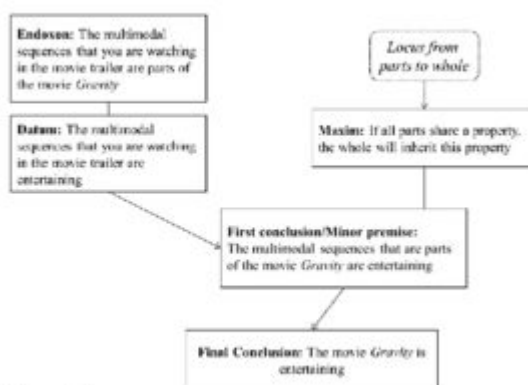
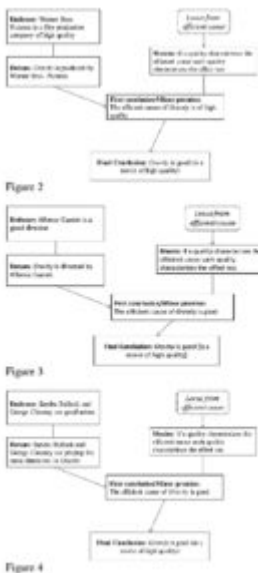


Figure 1

The Argumentum Model of Topics (Rigotti & Greco Morasso, 2010; see the literature cited there) is helpful in making explicit the inferential path that links the arguments and the standpoint by making explicit the locus that licenses the premises-conclusion relation. According to Rigotti and Greco Morasso, arguments are composed of two equally important dimensions: the endoxical (also known as

material or contextual) dimension and the logical (or procedural) dimension. In our case study, we see that the argument ‘The movie *Gravity* is entertaining’ (1.1) and ‘The multimodal sequences (parts) that you are watching in the movie trailer are entertaining’ (1.1.1) are linked by a synecdoche of the part-whole type that condenses a locus from parts to whole (figure 1). In the contextual dimension the endoxical premise ‘The multimodal sequences that you are watching in the movie trailer are parts of the movie *Gravity*’ combines with the factual premise (datum) ‘The multimodal sequences that you are watching in the movie trailer are entertaining’. The positive feature of being entertaining is transferred to the movie according to the maxim ‘If all parts share a property, the whole will inherit this property’.



The arguments ‘Sandra Bullock and George Clooney are starring’ (1.2.1), ‘Gravity is directed by Alfonso Cuarón’ (1.2.2), and ‘Gravity is produced by Warner Bros. Pictures’ (1.2.3) that support the evaluative standpoint ‘Gravity is good (is a movie of high quality)’ (1.2) are linked to the movie by a metonymical relation. Warner Bros. Pictures is the film production company that produces the movie, it is linked through a metonymy of the producer-for-product type and makes the viewer infer an argument licensed by a locus from efficient cause (figure 2). The director Alfonso Cuarón is also linked to the movie with a metonymy of the producer-for-product type and it is based

on a locus from efficient cause as well (figure 3). Sandra Bullock and George Clooney are the actors that play the main characters of the movie; their link to the movie operates upon a metonymy and the line of reasoning is a locus from efficient cause (figure 4). In the three arguments the quality of the production company, the actors and the director which is accepted as an endoxical premise is transferred to the movie in accordance with the maxim ‘If a quality characterizes the efficient cause such quality characterizes the effect too’.

6. Conclusion

For now I am able to draw only some very preliminary conclusions that I will develop in future research.

Movie trailers can be reconstructed as argumentative discourses where the standpoint *You should watch movie X in the theatre* is supported by multimodal arguments. The multimodal sequences contribute in performing the overall act of movie trailers as discourses. The rhetorical patterns employed in movie trailers are argumentatively relevant, that is they make the viewers infer the intended argument licenses by a specific argument scheme or locus, e.g. synecdoche makes the view infer an argument licenses by a locus from parts to whole and metonymical relations make the viewer infer an argument licensed by a locus from efficient cause.

From the discussion and the presentation of the case study, I can draw the methodological consideration that a combination of approaches and disciplines is

the only way to analyze complex audiovisual argumentative discourses.

NOTES

i. I am aware of the fact that the complex act performed by movies should not be easily dismissed and classified as 'entertainment'. Indeed, Alcolea-Banegas (2009) and Chatman (1990) claim that movies can argue. However, I will not deal with this issue here because it exceeds the topic of this paper.

ii. Movie trailers exaggerate the film's 'plot' "to maximise the viewer's expectations and curiosity concerning various aspects of the film and not just the film's story" (Maier, 2011, p. 145) and to raise doubt which are left unsolved "to trigger the viewers' keener expectations and persuade them to see the whole film later on" (p. 146). For Dornaletche Ruiz (2007, p. 105) the selection and montage of shots from the movie to realize a trailer is done with the objective of magnifying the movie and making its excellence stand out.

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