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# Reconstructing Multimodal Arguments in Advertisements: Combining Pragmatics and Argumentation Theory

Fabrizio Macagno<sup>1</sup> · Rosalice Botelho Wakim Souza Pinto<sup>2</sup>

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## Abstract

The analysis of multimodal argumentation in advertising is a crucial and problematic area of research. While its importance is growing in a time characterized by images and pictorial messages, the methods used for interpreting and reconstructing the structure of arguments expressed through verbal and visual means capture only isolated dimensions of this complex phenomenon. This paper intends to propose and illustrate a methodology for the reconstruction and analysis of “double-mode” arguments in advertisements, combining the instruments developed in social semiotics, pragmatics, and argumentation theory. An advertisement is processed through a five-step path. The analysis of its context, text genre, and images leads to a first representation of the messages that it encodes both pictorially and verbally (step 1). These first semantic representations are further enriched by including their polyphonic articulations and presuppositions (step 2), their explicatures (step 3), and their dialogical functions and illocutionary forces (step 4). These pragmatic steps retrieve the commitment structure of the ad, which allows a further argument analysis conducted through argumentation schemes (step 5).

**Keywords** Argumentative communication · Multimodal argumentation · Pragmatics · Argumentation schemes · Text genre

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## 1 Introduction

In a communication environment characterized by images and the expression of meaning through a variety of media (Hyland 2009, 59–60; 226), the role of multimodal argumentation is becoming crucial (Blair 1996, 23). The term “multimodal argumentation” describes a specific characteristic of a text, or a specific type of the so-called “visual arguments” (Birdsell and Groarke 1996, 2007; Roque 2012; Kjeldsen 2015a), namely the expression of meaning through more than one semi-otic mode. Due to this peculiarity, these arguments can be studied through a perspective that embraces more than one semiotic resource (Tseronis and Forceville 2017a, 5–6). Within this broad area of study, a crucial and specific type of multimodal argumentation characterizes a large proportion of printed advertisements, namely the so-called “double code” communication, in which the visual mode is combined with the verbal one (Roque 2012). This combination of, and coordination and interaction between writing and images has been the focus of fundamental studies in semiotics and rhetoric (Barthes 1964; Kress and Leeuwen 2001, 2006, 16–19).

The analysis of advertisements, due to the persuasive nature of this specific discourse type (Cook 1992, 4–5), essentially presupposes the analysis of the arguments that they express (Ripley 2008, 515). However, if we consider the classical definition of argument as “a social and verbal means of trying to resolve, or at least to contend with, a conflict or difference that has arisen or exists between two (or more) parties” (Walton 1990, 411), we notice that dual-code ads present a complex challenge. To reconstruct the arguments that they express, it is necessary to retrieve the meaning that is conveyed, namely what they say—both verbally and visually. The “contextualized” interpretations of what is said (or explicatures) becomes more complex when images become an explicit expression or specification of meaning. The analysis of the “logic” of arguments presupposes a pragmatic interpretation of multimodal message(s) (Yus 2008; Forceville and Clark 2014). This pragmatic level leads to the possibility of reconstructing the arguments and further retrieving the messages implicitly conveyed as conclusions or tacit premises (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984; Hitchcock 1998; Walton et al. 2008; Macagno and Damele 2013) in the “complex speech act of persuasion” (Walton 2007a, 87–90). However, only recently has the interaction between pragmatic interpretation and argument analysis started to be explored (Wildfeuer and Pollaroli 2017; Tseronis and Pollaroli 2018).

This paper addresses the interrelation between pragmatics and argumentation in the analysis visual-verbal arguments and intends to propose an analytical framework in which the instruments developed in pragmatics are combined with the tools of argumentation theory. Distinct stages of pragmatic analysis will be distinguished, focusing on the interpretation of different layers of meaning—including polyphony, specification, and higher-order explicatures (this latter term will be used to include both discourse moves and speech acts) (Searle 1969; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2001; Vanderveken 2013). The outcome of this pragmatic interpretation will be used for reconstructing the arguments through argumentation

schemes, abstract patterns that represent the logical and semantic relations between premises and conclusions characterizing the most common types of natural arguments (Walton et al. 2008). This methodological framework will be illustrated through the analysis of a Portuguese advertisement.

## 2 Theoretical Background

A visual argumentation approach to advertisements faces a first and crucial challenge at a theoretical level, as images or combinations between visual and verbal means have been considered by several studies as “irrational” means of persuasion (for a review, see Slade 2003). This perspective, however, is in conflict with their function and their nature as *messages*: they are used for conveying meaning ostensibly, and independently of the medium used, they require complex reasoning for understanding what is “said” and “meant” either linguistically or non-linguistically (Slade 2003, 153; Yus 2008; Forceville and Clark 2014). This perspective has been defended by some crucial recent works, in which multimodal advertisements have been shown to be perceived as instruments for conveying arguments (Kjeldsen 2015b) based on the retrieval of the coherence and relevance of the message (Bateman 2008, chap. 4). The analysis of multimodal argumentation is thus a complex and in part controversial phenomenon that can be framed within different currents of research and disciplines, including semiotics, discourse studies, pragmatics, and argumentation, each emphasizing one specific dimension of this type of text, and different methods for understanding the meaning expressed (also) non-verbally.

### 2.1 Text and Text Genre

A text can be analyzed considering three crucial principles (Rastier 1989, 302): (1) the text is attested empirically, not forged from abstract examples; (2) it is produced in a particular social practice; (3) it circulates in a particular genre and a specific medium. On this perspective, when producing or interpreting a text, the producer or interpreter will adopt text models previously internalized in the long-term memory (text genres) and adapt them to contextual elements. Some text genres are more creative than others according to the social practice they are linked to. Influenced by Bakhtin’s Circle (Voloshinov 1986), Maingueneau (1998) and Bronckart (1996) claimed that these texts (texts genres) are social-communication practices and are dependent on cultural and historical (contextual) elements. The theory of genres allows the producer/interpreter a certain cognitive economy when producing or reading a text.

Within this model, argumentation cannot be studied in abstract without considering the extra-linguistic aspects (a perspective adopted by traditional text grammars and some theoretical works of text linguistics), including the visual ones (Blair 1996). For this reason, argumentative texts need to be considered as empirical texts, which include verbal and non-verbal resources and correspond to global communication units (Bronckart 2008, 103). Accordingly, the analysis of their materialization needs to be performed considering the social practices in which they operate

(van Eemeren 2011). Following a *top-down* methodology as adopted by Bronckart (1996, 2008), this type of analysis needs to begin from a description of the social context where the text is produced and interpreted, and only afterwards can it take into account how the message is expressed and conveyed.

## 2.2 Argumentation—From a Strictly Linguistic Approach to a Broad Text Genre Perspective

Among the different linguistic theoretical approaches to the study of argumentation, it is possible to draw a distinction between approaches that focus on the utterance level and others that take into account the textual level. The first group includes the theory commonly known as “*argumentation dans la langue*” developed by (Ducret 1972; Anscombe and Ducrot 1983; Anscombe 1989, 1995), who investigated the structure and function of argumentative connectors and linguistic expressions, showing the importance of argumentative orientation in utterances, triggered by these linguistic elements. The second group includes the works by (Adam 2001) and Bronckart (1996, 2008). The former pointed out the existence of some cognitive models organized into prototypical sequences which include the argumentative sequence.<sup>1</sup> Together with Bonhomme (Adam and Bonhomme 1997), Adam addressed the problem of analyzing argumentation in advertisements, conceiving argumentation as the adhesion of the public to a certain thesis. Bronckart analyzed the dialogical nature of argumentative sequences and its relationship with contextual aspects.

Considering the complexity of the construction of texts, involving contextual aspects, the construction of argumentation is a social and discursive activity, directly linked to the contextual practice in which it operates. Therefore, the linguistic approaches shown above do not seem adequate to describing the argumentation in genres whose aim is to persuade a particular audience to act in a certain way or to accomplish a certain objective—which characterizes the discourse type of advertisement. Advertisements are defined by their aim, consisting in convincing people to purchase a product or to adhere to a concept or idea (Cook 1992). They represent a “call for action” (Pollaroli 2013). For this specific type of text genre (or “discourse type”), it is necessary to adopt an analytic framework capturing the very nature of an argument—the actual or potential difference of opinion or doubt (Walton 1990, 2006). As pointed out by van Eemeren (2010, 235), in a product advertisement there is a difference of opinions between the company who sells the product (the protagonist) and the potential consumer (the antagonist) (cf. Kjeldsen 2012, 243; Pollaroli 2013, 3). The former has to present and defend an “evaluative standpoint[s] in which the product [...] to sell is positively assessed” (van Eemeren 2010, 235). The latter can reconstruct the argumentation knowing the final claim and the context where it is placed.

The analysis of multimodal argumentation in advertisements needs to combine two crucial insights that these distinct approaches bring to light (Pinto 2014,

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<sup>1</sup> According to Adam (2001), there are five prototypical sequences: *narrative*, *descriptive*, *argumentative*, *expositional*, and *dialogical*, each with its own characteristics.

2015). First, advertisements can be interpreted only starting from their *communicative function* (van Eemeren 2010, 27) that can be retrieved from the context in which they are expressed, and that can be “conveyed partly or wholly by non-verbal means” (Tseronis 2013, 7). Second, two levels of text analysis need to be considered in a dynamic interaction: (i) contextual aspects, which include the conditions of production of the text, producer and potential consumer involved, and place and date of production; and (ii) textual levels, which include visual and verbal elements selected by the producer for the reconstruction of the argumentative activity by the viewer of the text.

### 2.3 A Multimodal Text Approach

Inspired by the pioneering work of Roland Barthes (1964), the importance of analyzing the interrelation between different semiotic systems has been increasingly acknowledged in communication and argumentation (Hall 1969; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001; Kress and Leeuwen 2006; Kjeldsen 2012). In particular, the social semiotics approach (van Leeuwen van Leeuwen 2005) developed specific tools and methods for interpreting multimodal texts. Kress and van Leeuwen analyzed the semiotic potential of a given semiotic resource or mode (verbal or visual content) present in different multimodal documents (posters, advertisements, textbooks, children’s books, illustrated magazines, etc.), pointing out some taxonomies for the description of the image (Kress and Leeuwen 2006). Following Halliday’s theoretical distinction of the various textual metafunctions,<sup>2</sup> they adapted these categories to semiotic modes different from the verbal one, namely: *the representational* (if it is a narrative or a conceptual image), *the interactive* (the interaction between the participants in the image and the viewer is analyzed following three aspects: contact, social distance and attitude), and *the compositional* (images are made up of elements that can be decomposed through three interrelated systems: information value, salience and framing).

This systematic analysis of images using specific categories can be considered as the precondition for a further analytical step necessary for reconstructing the argumentation expressed or specified by them. Images and the visual components associated with writing are by definition not an argument, as they do not provide a set of propositions from which a conclusion can be drawn (Johnson 2003; Patterson 2011). Without a clear method for interpreting images, their translation into a propositional forms risk being arbitrary and subjective, thus leading to problems of reliability (Groarke 2002; Johnson 2003). To this purpose, the combination of the tools of visual interpretation with those of linguistic analysis was advanced in some recent works (Yus 2008; Wharton 2009; Forceville and Clark 2014). According to this approach, images, and in particular the combination of verbal and visual modes, can be considered as a type of ostensive communication conveying messages

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<sup>2</sup> Halliday (1985) argues that linguistic and functional choices are a result of social and cultural circumstances and developed a theory of the fundamental functions of language. He pointed out three different metafunctions: *ideational*, *interpersonal* and *textual*.

encoded not only verbally, but also through visual signals, emblems, and pictorial codes. In each context and culture, visual images can encode specific information, which can be then enriched, namely fully specified contextually through pragmatic inferences. In this sense, images can be considered as nonverbally “coded” messages that can be either enriched by the verbal messages or be used to enrich the latter.

These works provide a clear path for guiding the passage from a multimodal message (and more precisely a visual and verbal one) into a form that can be analyzed from an argumentative perspective. However, these insights represent isolated approaches, each focusing on only one dimension of the complex phenomenon of visual argumentation. In order to analyze the message expressed through verbal and visual means, it is necessary to combine the instruments of visual interpretation with both the linguistic methods used for reconstructing the message (verbally and nonverbally) encoded (and contextually specified), and the tools used in argumentation theory for representing and retrieving structure of the arguments expressed and implied. The combination of these methods can unveil not only the implicit dimension of multimodal argumentation, but also its persuasive potential and its possible weaknesses.

In the following section, we will outline a proposal for integrating the different analytical methods for analyzing a specific type of multimodal text in which arguments are expressed through a double code, the visual and the verbal, within a specific discourse type, the advertisement.

### 3 Methodology

Advertisements are characterized by a combination of verbal and non-verbal contents. However, the verbal component needs to be at the same time effective and concise, which results in messages that strongly rely on their implicit dimension. The reconstruction of the meaning of an advertisement is thus dependent on the reconstruction of the different types of implicit contents that it expresses, takes for granted, and implies. The literature in pragmatics distinguishes between two distinct types of “inexplicit” messages, the implicatures and the explicatures (or implicitures). While implicatures are inferences from what is said, namely the communication of something else in addition to and through what is said, explicatures are pragmatically inferred developments of logical forms (Borg 2016, 339)—the communication of a content closely related to what is said (Bach 1994). A specific type of explicature is the so-called higher-order explicatures, namely the identification of the “illocutionary” force of the utterance or more precisely the dialogical goal it pursues. In addition to these two types of implicit meaning, we can distinguish other two categories, namely the polyphonic structure of a message—the distinction between the different commitments or viewpoints that are expressed and their relation to distinct discourse entities—and the presuppositions—the content that is not implied, but taken for granted.

These four types of implicit content can be addressed only after retrieving the “incomplete” logical form of the message, which constitutes a first and preliminary step. However, the interpretation of its implicit dimension needs to be analyzed



through a combination distinct methods and theoretical frameworks, each focusing on one specific implicit aspect: (1) the disambiguation and specification (enrichment) of the message; (2) the reconstruction of the polyphonic structure of the utterance, including the identification of the presuppositions (the information that is taken for granted by the speaker as part of the common ground, see Stalnaker 1974; Atlas 2008); (3) the detection and retrieval of the higher-order explicatures; and (4) the reconstruction of the further inferences, or “what is meant” (Grice 1975), namely what is implied by the speaker and inferred by the addressees through presumptions and contextual information (Macagno 2012; Macagno and Walton 2013).

### 3.1 Explicatures: Disambiguation, Specification, Enrichment

To reconstruct what the utterer says in an advertisement, it is necessary to enrich the “logical form” of the verbal message. Grice introduced a distinction between what is said by the sentence and what is merely implied. However, this dichotomy is incomplete, as the lexical content and the syntactic structure alone can lead to incomplete logical (propositional) forms, which need to be enriched, complemented, and specified through pragmatic processes (Borg 2016). The outcome of this pragmatic operation are the so-called “explicatures” (Carston 1988; Blakemore 1992, 60; Sperber and Wilson 1995, 177–182; Carston 2002a, 119; Carston 2002b) or implicatures (Bach 2010, 131–132), defined as the partly implicit dimension of what is conveyed directly, which needs to be fully determined in context.

Enrichment involves different aspects, which can be broadly divided in disambiguation (Levinson 2000, 174) and specification operations. Disambiguation concerns lexical ambiguity or structural (syntactic) ambiguity (called also grammatical ambiguities), which can result in sentences that are related to different semantic representations. Below are some examples:

1. Lexical ambiguity (Lyons 1977, 550) (includes homonymic words and homographs):
  - a. Nothing *sucks* like an Electrolux. (from an ad of Electrolux vacuums).  
*Explicature*: “sucks” can mean both: 1. “to be inadequate,” and 2. “to draw by or as if by suction.” In this case, 2 applies.
  - b. Guess what else is *hot* (visual: a beautiful actress, a beautiful actor, and a cup of coffee). (from a Starbucks ad).  
*Explicature*: “hot” can mean both: 1. “attractive,” and 2. “having a high temperature.” In this case, 2 is the meaning chosen for the Starbucks coffee.
  - c. Trust Sleepy’s... For the *Rest* of Your Life. (Sleepy’s tagline).  
*Explicature*: “rest” can mean both: 1. “the remaining part,” and 2. “a bodily state characterized by minimal functional and metabolic activities.” In this case, 2 applies.

## 2. Structural ambiguity

- a. Think different. (Apple's slogan).  
*Explicature*: "different" can be considered both as 1. an adjective (differently) and 2. the object of the verb. In this case, meaning 2 applies.
- b. IBM invites you to Think. (from an IBM ad).  
*Explicature*: "to Think" can be considered both as 1. a verbal phrase and 2. a prepositional phrase (to the event called "Think"). In this case, 2 applies.

The process of specification governs the passage from a semantic nonspecific structure to a specific (or fully enriched and determinate) proposition that can carry a truth-value (Atlas 2005, 40). These specification operations include the following:

3. Indexical resolution and reference identification (Bezuidenhout 1997; Kasia Jaszczolt 1999; Capone 2011)
  - a. Do not kill your wife with work! Let electricity do *it*. (from an ad of an electricity company).  
*Explicature*: Let electricity do [the work].
  - b. Escape from your girlfriend's pointless question *here*. (from a PlayStation ad inside a metro car).  
*Explicature*: Escape from your girlfriend's pointless question [while you are sitting in this car].
4. Identification of unarticulated constituents (Recanati 2002, 301)
  - a. Obey the speed limit. (from an ad by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile to promote road safety) (visual: the ad depicts Yohan Blake, 100 M world champion).  
*Explicature*: Obey the speed limit [when driving][on a road with a speed limit sign].
  - b. Stop when you are tired. (from an ad by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile to promote road safety).  
*Explicature*: Stop [driving][and then rest] when you are tired.
5. Ellipsis Unpacking
  - a. 100% natural. (from a 7UP ad).  
*Explicature*: [The flavor of the drink] [is] 100% natural.
  - b. Low carb at Taco Bell. (from a Taco Bell ad).  
*Explicature*: [You can eat food with] low carb at Taco Bell.
6. Generality Narrowing (modulation) (Borg 2016, 341)
  - a. *Cheat death*. The antioxidant power of pomegranate juice. (from a POM ad, selling a drink made out of pomegranate juice).  
*Explicature*: Cheat [in the sense of avoid] [some potential causes of] death.

- b. There's plenty of room for all God's *creatures*. Right next to the mashed potatoes. (from a restaurant ad).

*Explicature*: There's plenty of room for [the food made out of] all God's creatures.

7. Bridging inference (Recanati 2002, 301)

- a. Never drink *and* drive. (from an ad by the *Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile* to promote road safety).

*Explicature*: Never drink [alcoholic drinks in an unadmitted quantity] and [soon thereafter] drive.

These operations do not exhaust the information that is made explicitly available to the interlocutor. Another dimension that needs to be considered is the responsibility of what is said, namely the “polyphonic” structure of an utterance.

### 3.2 Polyphonic Structure

As Bakhtin pointed out, “our speech is filled with overflowing with other people's words, which are transmitted with highly varied degrees of accuracy and impartiality” (Bakhtin 1981, 337). All natural utterances fundamentally involve a plurality of points of view (Nølke 1994, 28:154), in the sense that they stage different characters that are responsible for different viewpoints. Ducrot distinguished between three types of different “voices” that we can detect in an utterance (Ducrot 1984, chap. 8; Marnette 2001):

- The speaking subject: the physical person who produces the utterance (by speaking or writing);
- The locutor (*locuteur*): the person responsible for the act of enunciation and referred to as *I*;
- The enunciator(s) (*énonciateurs*): the discourse entities responsible for the different viewpoints manifested in the utterance(s) (Bronckart 1996, p. 324; see also Rocci 2009 for the role of different voices in advertisements).

This splitting of the subject emerges clearly in cases of quotation (Clark and Gerrig 1990; Brendel et al. 2011a, 1; Meibauer 2014, 184; Macagno and Walton 2017, chap. 1). For example, we consider the following example:

- a. Only a bit over? You bloody idiot. (from a Transport Accident Commission ad against drink driving).

Here the speaking subject (which can be identified with the public authority “TAC”) is different from the person (referred to by “you” in the second utterance) responsible for the first utterance (the person claiming that s/he is only a bit over). This distinction leads to the following explicature:

*Explicature:* [You said] ["[I am] only a bit over?"] You bloody idiot.

In this example, the TAC is the speaking subject, but it is the locutor and enunciator of only "You bloody idiot," while the individual who was drinking and driving is the locutor and enunciator of "[I am] only a bit over."

As this case shows, polyphony becomes a crucial element of meaning reconstruction when the viewpoints staged in an utterance conflict with each other, displaying a dialogue. Sometimes, this conflict of viewpoints is represented through an implicit reference (echo) to another locutor's words, which is possible to retrieve only through the context. For example, we consider the following writing, which was displayed on the aforementioned anti-drinking drive ad in a bigger font:

b. Only a little bit dead (visual: a corpse next to a car crash scene).

This writing represents an implicit interconnection between different voices, which can be reconstructed only through the context (a victim of a car accident) and the other writing, reported at a. above. The TAC is the speaking subject and the locutor of the utterance, but the enunciator of only a part of it ("dead"). The responsibility of "[I am] only a little bit [said before the time of the crash]" belongs to the victim (the speaking subject), who becomes a second enunciator ( $E_2$ ). Thus,  $E_2$ 's utterance is completed by the TAC ( $E_1$ ). The explicature of this polyphonic structure can be presented as follows:

*Explicature:* [Before the crash you thinking to be] ["only a bit ["] [in the sense of "a bit over"] [but I say that now you are] dead.

The polyphonic articulation of an utterance is crucial for establishing the explicit commitments of the speakers, namely the dialogical responsibilities of the participants in a dialogue (or a discourse) (Hamblin 1970, 237; Walton and Krabbe 1995, 23–24).

### 3.3 Presuppositions and Polyphony

The internal dialogue between the different voices staged in an utterance involves a second, implicit, dimension (Macagno and Capone 2016). When we read the following utterance, we notice that the dialogue between the enunciators becomes more complex:

c. What did you feel when your father did not support your dreams? (from a Reebok India ad<sup>3</sup>).

In this utterance, the locutor is staging two different voices. The first ( $E_1$ ) is responsible for the questions concerning the interlocutor's feelings. However, this claim is based on a series of preconditions, triggered by the temporal clause introduced by

<sup>3</sup> The video of the ad can be consulted at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyyP6IDkWbk> (last accessed on 15 March 2020).

“when” (Levinson 1983, 182), namely that (1) the interlocutor had dreams, (2) she had a father at the relevant time, and (3) he did not support her dreams.  $E_1$ 's question would not make sense unless these conditions—pragmatic presuppositions—are accepted as true.

Pragmatic presuppositions represent the relationship between presupposition and the use of a sentence in an utterance. A proposition  $p$  is presupposed when it is taken for granted by a person in performing a speech act (whether an assertion or a different speech act), whose felicity, or conversational acceptability depends on the interlocutor's acceptance of  $p$  (Stalnaker 1974, 2002; Allan 2013). This approach can be described as based on two principles: 1) the presupposition  $p$  is a condition of the appropriateness of the use of a sentence; and 2) presupposing consists in taking its truth for granted, based on the belief that  $p$  is a part of the common ground (namely all the conversational participants accept that  $p$  and it is common belief that everyone accepts that  $p$ —namely acts as though  $p$  were true) (Reimer and Bezuidenhout 2004, 308).

The particular epistemic status of a presupposition as a part of mutual or common knowledge can be considered as a specific viewpoint, as a content that is attributable to a voice that belongs to a “collective voice” (Ducrot 1984, 179).<sup>4</sup> According to this polyphonic perspective, the (inevitable) use of a presupposition cannot be considered as resulting in a direct responsibility (commitment) of the enunciator. It rather belongs to an indefinite enunciator, which Ducrot calls in French an “*ON*” (the indefinite pronoun for “someone”) (Ducrot 1980, 83; Ducrot 1984, 231–233). In this sense, the use of a presupposition introduces an implicit polyphony in an utterance, in which the locutor splits the voices and the commitments (viewpoints) between two enunciators, taking on the responsibility of only what is said, but not of what is presupposed (Ducrot 1984, 190).

According to this perspective, utterance (c) above would be represented as a more complex internal dialogue. In addition to ( $E_1$ ) (“What did you feel when  $x$ ?”), the utterance involves another enunciator, the *ON*, who is responsible for the aforementioned three presuppositions. These propositions are presented as common ground, and thus they are conveyed as they were shared by both  $E_1$  and the interlocutor (in addition to other individuals, if any). The readers do not need to be informed about the truth of *ON*'s views: these are presented as commonly accepted, and thus they are not questionable.

<sup>4</sup> «Je signalerai enfin une perspective particulièrement prometteuse qui s'ouvre dès qu'on considère le sens comme un représentation de l'énonciation, représentation consistant notamment à y faire entendre la voix de divers énonciateurs s'adressant à divers destinataires et à identifier ces rôles illocutionnaires avec des personnages qui peuvent être, entre autres, ceux de l'énonciation. Il s'agit de la construction, dans le discours, du locuteur et de l'allocutaire. Psycho- et socio-linguistes ont quelquefois noté [...] que l'on peut, en parlant, constituer une image de soi et de la personne à qui l'on parle, image que l'interlocuteur tantôt accepte et tantôt rejette. Un des principaux moyens de cette constitution est justement la possibilité, inscrite selon nous dans la langue, c'est-à-dire dans la signification des mots et des phrases, de faire s'exprimer différentes voix, en donnant l'instruction de les identifier à des êtres de la réalité –et en spécifiant même certaines contraintes à observer dans cette identification» (Ducrot 1980, 56).

### 3.4 Purpose of the Utterance and What is Meant—Higher-Order Explicatures

The last dimension that the reconstruction procedure involves is the determination of the “higher-level explicatures” (Wilson and Sperber 1993; Carston 2002a, 119–120; Wilson and Sperber 2012, 167). Communication (in our case verbal and visual communication) does not only amount to an exchange of information but also to the performance of a speech act (Austin 1962; Searle 1969). An advertisement intends to transform the situation (the communicative setting) of the addressees by modifying their beliefs and/or their behavioral attitude. Thus, to understand an utterance, we have to identify its informative content and its pragmatic goal, which can explain its function. This indication is normally expressed as part of the pragmatic development of the logical form.

Speech acts can explain the relationship between the grammatical form of an utterance and the prototypical function associated to it (Strawson 1964). For example, interrogative sentences usually express questions, a communicative intention falling into the category of directive speech acts. However, speech acts often do not follow this stereotypical association (Kissine 2013), namely they are “indirect.” An *indirect speech act* (shorthand for a speech act indirectly performed) is an act that is expressed as “hidden” by another act (see also Sadock 2006). For instance, in the utterance “Can you reach the salt?” we can recognize an act associated with the literal meaning of the utterance (a question). However, this utterance expresses indirectly a directive request for the receptor of the message to pass the salt, which is the primary intention of the utterance. The reconstruction of the indirect speech act in this case follows two criteria (Sadock 2006, 69): (1) the speaker desires the addressee to perform the requested action and (2) the speaker believes that the hearer is able to carry out the action. In this sense, the reconstruction of indirect speech acts is essentially grounded on the conversational background, on which the analyst (and the addressee) relies to determine the intention of the speaker (Vanderveken 2013, 61).

The speech act perspective is effective for determining the cognitive effects of an utterance, and in a broader perspective the commitments of the interlocutors (Harnish 2005; Macagno and Walton 2017; Geurts 2019). The speech act of assertion, for example, can be described as binding the speaker to a specific responsibility, namely being responsible for the asserted content and providing reasons in case it is challenged (Hamblin 1970; Alston 2000; Harnish 2005). However, this type of description is not sufficient for determining the interactional function of an utterance, nor is it independent of other considerations. A speaker may perform an assertion for many reasons that cannot be reduced to representing a belief concerning a state of affairs; for example, he or she may intend to share information, persuade, or provide reasons. Moreover, indirect speech acts cannot be determined independent of the analysis of the context in which they are uttered, and more importantly the communicative setting and purpose. In this sense, the effects that an utterance can have on a dialogue and the intentions expressed by non-serious utterances (Kissine 2012, 177) need to be determined starting from the reconstruction of the interactional goals of the utterances.

To this purpose, a crucial element that needs to be considered for complementing the logical form and retrieving “what is said” is the indication of the contribution of each utterance to the “work of the interaction in which it occurs” (Geis 1995, 10;

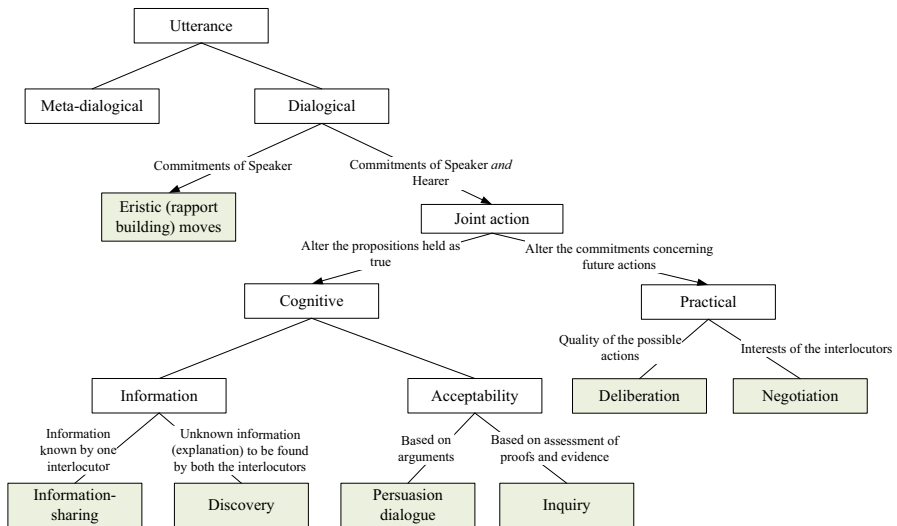
32). The focus of this level of analysis is on the joint (social) actions performed by the interlocutors, and not on the individual actions that speech act theory describes (Mey 2001, 214; Kecskes 2010b, 2889). Therefore, higher order explicatures need also to indicate the conversational demand that the participants express through their utterances (Mann 1988; Dascal 1992): according to this perspective, a question can be asked for several interactional reasons, such as requesting information, demanding reasons, or inviting explanations.

In (Macagno and Bigi 2017), the reconstruction of higher level explicatures was based on the actions that utterances (or strings or parts of utterances) perform in a dialogical context (Levinson 1983, 291), namely the intended effects that the utterances have on the conversational interaction (Widdowson 1979, 144; Stubbs 1983, vol. 4, chap. 8.2; Merin 1994, 238; Mey 2006; Walton 2007b). The intentions underlying an utterance were referred to as “conversational intentions” in the sense of intents (that can be presumed in a given context) to carry out some conversational effects by means of their utterances (or parts or strings thereof) (Bach and Harnish 1979, 7; Tseronis and Pollaroli 2018, 151). The communicative intentions were classified according to general categories of the possible dialogical goals, taken to capture the global interactional purposes of the utterances (Ruhi 2007; Haugh and Jaszczolt 2012, 101)<sup>5</sup> negotiated during the conversation (Kecskes 2010a, 2013, 50).

Higher level explicatures (in the sense of proposals of engaging in a specific joint activity such as exchanging information or making a joint decision, see Kádár & Haugh, 2013, pp. 221–223) can be reconstructed based on the taxonomy of dialogical intentions set out in (Macagno and Bigi 2017; Macagno and Walton 2017; Macagno 2018; Macagno and Bigi 2020), based on the types of dialogue developed by Walton (Walton 1989, 8; Walton 1992). The following Fig. 1 represents the types of dialogical intentions (or acts), organized in dichotomic categories.

On this perspective, through “higher order explicatures,” the specific semantic representation of an utterance includes not merely the indication of its illocutionary force (as maintained by Carston), but the specification of its contribution to a communicative purpose (Van Dijk 1977) or conversational demand (Mann 1988; Dascal 1992, 45). This type of pragmatic indication describes the communicative, interactive function of the utterances (Labov and Fanshel 1977, 58–62), explaining the general conversational purpose a participant is pursuing through a verbal act (is s/he requesting information? Is s/he trying to persuade the interlocutor?) within a specific speech situation (Grosz and Sidner 1986; Mann 1988; Dascal 1992, 45; 50; Moeschler 1992, 2010). Clearly, the retrieval of this interactional purpose requires information that goes beyond the syntactic structure of an utterance (Levinson 2012), involving different types of evidence (Ifantidou 2001, 188–190), such as grammatical moods (Carston 2002a, 120; Carston 2013), the speech acts associated with the

<sup>5</sup> We will use “global communicative/dialogical intention” or “dialogue goal” interchangeably to refer to a “we-intention” that characterizes the interaction, to which the individual utterances need to be relevant. The term “dialogical intention” will refer to the higher order intention expressed by the individual move (negotiating; obtaining information, etc.) which in turn embed the communicative intention (the specific intention of performing a specific action through one’s utterance) (Haugh and Jaszczolt 2012, 102).



**Fig. 1** Classification of intentions for higher-level explicatures

syntactical form, the utterers involved, their roles, and the institutional setting in which they act.

This approach to the enrichment of the propositional form of an utterance allows determining why it was used, specifying the type of interaction that it can propose to the interlocutor. For advertisements, this aspect is crucial, as a mere identification of the direct or indirect speech acts cannot account for the different types of interactions between the scenarios represented and the verbal messages. Advertising, being defined as a strategy for modifying the customers' behavior, is characterized by a decision-making intention (Pollaroli and Rocci 2015, 163–164). However, this intention is pursued through different other types of dialogical acts—such as sharing information or persuading.

### 3.5 Reconstruction of Further Argumentative Inferences

As underscored above, advertisements are a specific discourse type characterized by the function of promoting a product, namely leading the reader (in our case of printed ads) to purchasing (in case of a commercial product) or supporting (in case of a governmental or political product) it. This function presupposes the potential existence of a doubt or lack of knowledge related to the desirability of the product, as the role of the advertisement is to “persuade people to act as they might not otherwise act” (Slade 2002, 157). The crucial goal of this type of complex message is to influence the purchaser's behavior (“you should buy *X* because of *Y*”) by providing reasons (Pollaroli 2013; Rocci et al. 2013), a type of argumentative strategy that can be represented and analyzed through the instruments of argumentation theory and in particular argumentation schemes (Walton et al. 2008).



Argumentation schemes are instruments for representing how a conclusion is supported by the premises through a principle of inference. They are a combination of abstract premises that include a minimal characterization of the semantic properties that a proposition needs to have to be part of this structure, that lead to a conclusion that captures a category of possible natural arguments. For example, an argumentation scheme from expert opinion presents the following structure (Walton et al. 2008, 91):

*Premise 1:* Source *E* is an expert in subject domain *S* containing proposition *A*.

*Premise 2:* *E* asserts that proposition *A* is true (false).

*(Conditional Premise):* If Source *E* asserts that proposition *A* is true (false), then *A* should be considered as true (false)

*Conclusion:* *A* should be considered as true (false).

Many arguments based on the authority of a source (a physician, a professor, an economist, etc.) can be reconstructed as “arguments from expert opinion,” in which the actual words of the expert and his or her actual expertise (the domain of expertise) replaces general variables.

Argumentation schemes are the modern development of the ancient *topoi* or *loci*, the commonplaces used for inventing and analyzing arguments. The topics were conceived as based on maxims, or principles of natural inference, that derived from Aristotle’s *Topics* and *Rhetoric*. These inferential principles were classified in categories that concerned the “sources,” namely the types of “major” premises or generalizations on which the strength of the argument was based. A fundamental distinction was traced between internal topics (or arguments whose premises are based on the subject matter under consideration) and the external ones (or arguments in which the conclusion is grounded on the authority of a source—an expert, a witness, or the majority of the people) (Braet 2004). A second important distinction—a pragmatic one—needs to be made between practical and theoretical arguments (Keefer 1996), where the former provide reasons for a course of action, while the latter for the acceptability of a proposition. The combination of these two criteria allows a fundamental classification of the argumentation schemes developed so far in argumentation theory (Macagno 2015; Macagno and Walton 2015) (Fig. 2).

These distinctions allow the reconstruction of the reasoning underlying an advertisement, starting with the identification of the discourse goal (make or influence a decision) and then the type of premises (whether means to a goal, or consequences of the purchase or not purchase). These fundamental arguments are normally supported by other types of arguments, developing a chain of arguments consisting of different interrelated argumentative steps (Walton 2006, 2007a; Rocci et al. 2013).

#### 4 Applying the Analytical Framework

The aforementioned methodological procedure can be used for different types of text. One of the more complex text genres is advertising in which the context and the message is extremely elliptical, reduced to a visual representation of a setting

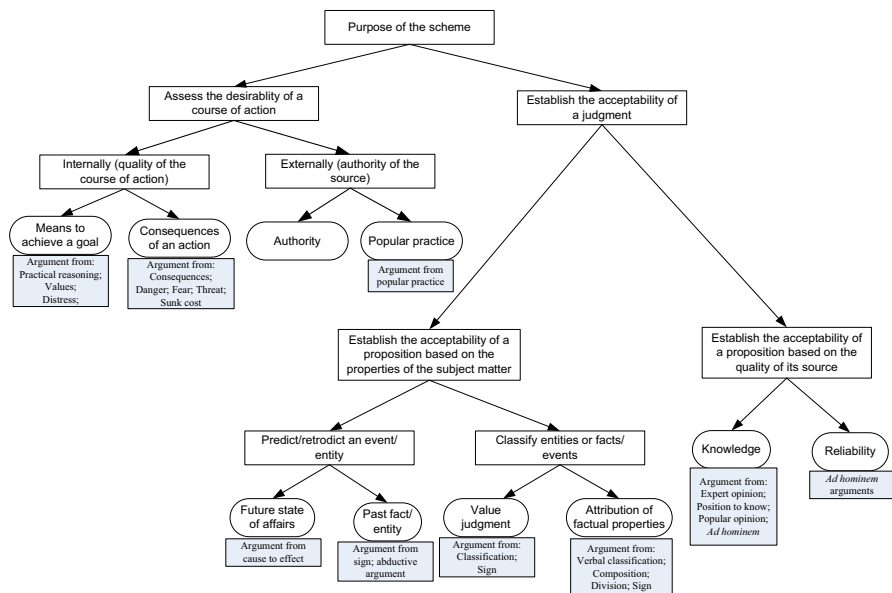


Fig. 2 Classification of argumentation schemes

(Kjeldsen 2012) that constitutes the emergent ground to be used for the interpretation of the written utterance (Kecskes 2008; Kecskes and Zhang 2009). The genre of advertising provides further background information, which can be summarized as follows:<sup>6</sup>

- a. Several sizes of text boxes where the written part is displayed with letters in different fonts and sizes are used to call attention to a specific part of the ad;
- b. Visual elements (images included) that interact dynamically with other elements (often verbal), contributing to textual coherence;
- c. Axiological positive aspects in relation to the product and the advertised idea.

Besides the aspects previously mentioned, it is also relevant to point out the specificity of the communicative persuasive intent of this genre. As mentioned above, in every product advertisement, it is possible to detect an implicit or explicit argument resulting in the final conclusion “Buy product *X*” grounded on the premises pointing out the qualities of *X* or the advantages of buying *X* (Pollaroli 2013, 3). In this specific text genre visuals are not only images (Tseronis 2013, 8): in argumentative communication one needs to pay attention “not only to the content but also to the

<sup>6</sup> In most advertising documents in which the goal is to convince people to buy a product, the idea depicted is always associated to hedonic and pragmatic values (the individual’s well-being, pleasure, performance) (Pinto and Teixeira, 2013; see also Pollaroli, 2013; Ripley, 2008; Kjeldsen 2012, 2015 for studies on multimodal argumentation in advertisements).

form and style”.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, in this genre the verbal and the visual elements must be analyzed together for better understanding the argumentation. Certainly, they form one meaningful whole, but for the purpose of argumentative analysis, these dimensions need to be regarded separately, according to the theoretical description adopted.

A specific case study is provided below<sup>8</sup> (Fig. 3), taken from a corpus of corporate communication documents of both commercial and non-governmental organizations.<sup>9</sup> In this specific case, the advertisement is characterized by a profit goal, as the advertised entity is the national Portuguese airline TAP.

In 2008, the Portuguese airline TAP Portugal developed a marketing campaign to compete with low-cost airlines. It introduced five new products in order to attract different clients: TAP discount/TAP basic/TAP classic/TAP plus, and TAP executive, each one with different prices and specific characteristics to reach a different public. In this case study, the advertisement is produced to sell the TAP Plus product.

#### 4.1 Analysis of the Context and the Semantic representation of the Message

The first step in our analysis consists in the description of the message and the context in which the advertisement is used, and the retrieval of the background information necessary for understanding it (Cook 1992, 1). The discourse type of advertising can be described as a kind of commercial communication characterized by its specific function, which is “always to persuade people to buy a particular product” (Cook 1992, 4), namely to provide reasons to the clients affecting their decision-making process. This discourse type, therefore, always involve a product, which in our case is primarily the product TAP Plus and alternatively the other products offered by TAP. Other crucial elements that this context presupposes are: a) a seller (the airline company TAP identified by the logo), and b) the potential customers, including c) the woman represented in the picture on the left hand side of the advertisement—which by her clothes can be inferred to be a businesswoman, a potential consumer of this product (which is more expensive than the others). Considering the Portuguese “visual culture” (Birdsell and

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<sup>7</sup> There are many visual techniques that may be considered for the study of argumentative communication of these texts such as contrast, regularity, repetition, symmetry, among others. Moreover, he points out other elements, such as line, shape, color, tone, texture, orientation, arrangement, movement and framing (Tseronis 2013, 8).

<sup>8</sup> Authorization to use this advertisement for research and for publishing it on scientific journals was granted on 12 January 2018 by the CEO of the TAP.

<sup>9</sup> The corpus is formed of different types of corporate communication documents produced in the period May–June 2008. The specific corpus of the ads of the company TAP Portugal amounted to 18 advertisements collected from newspapers; magazines (external or internal—in circulation in the company), folders, and banners. The example that has been chosen illustrates the TAP Air Portugal campaign “Liberdade de Escolha – um Voo, Cinco Formas de Viajar” (“Freedom of Choice - one Flight, Five Ways to Travel”), launched on 9 May 9 2008.



Fig. 3 Advertisement from TAP Portugal—2008

Groarke 1996, 6), the dress code for an executive corresponds to suit depicted in the image, leading to an immediate conclusion concerning the role of the woman.

In this context, the following utterances can be read (translated from the Portuguese):

- (1) “Between quickness and flexibility, I choose both.”
- (2) 125% miles Victoria.
- (3) Security and X-ray priority.
- (4) Exclusive check-in.
- (5) Priority baggage delivery.
- (6) Full refund.
- (7) Board in freedom of choice. 1 flight, 5 different ways to travel. TAP discount. TAP basic. TAP classic. TAP plus. TAP executive.

It is important to point out that in European Portuguese (EP) the imperative in (7) is expressed through the use of the third person singular. In EP, the third person singular is perceived as more formal than the second person singular, thus marking a specific audience that the ad seeks to address, namely people who choose to pay more to get the best services. Together with the characterization of the woman as a businesswoman, the linguistic mark of (7) leads to a first crucial inference that the product advertised addresses a specific market sector and intends to be distinguished from both the potential competitors—other high-end products—and other companies providing cheaper products (low-cost companies).

Together with the utterances, it is necessary to specify the agents that play a role in the communication of the advertisement. The text of this airline advertisement can be assumed to be produced by professionals from the marketing department inside or outside the company. This is usually not identifiable in the product advertisement, but it is essential for distinguishing the locutor (the individual

responsible for the act of uttering the words) from the points of view, the voices that are expressed (Ducrot 1984; Marnette 2001). In this case, the locutors (the individuals working in the TAP marketing office with whom the company TAP is identified) display different voices (the *énonciateur*), namely discourse entities responsible for the different viewpoints manifested in the utterance(s) and identifiable either through the visual image or the reconstruction of the communicative setting.

In this specific advertisement, these voices can be attributed to their corresponding discourse entities through inference, as no explicit indication is provided. The discourse entities that can be identified through the images and the common knowledge of the communication setting are the following: (1) the airline company (TAP, represented by the logo); (2) the executive woman (depicted in the image); (3) the buyers of the product (the commercial target inferable by the communication setting); and (4) the competitor(s) (inferable from the common ground concerning a commercial product). These elements need to be combined with the utterances (1)–(7) in order to provide a coherent reading of the ad, in which a “rhetorical structure” can be recognized (Bateman 2008, chap. 4).

The attribution of the viewpoints to these entities is not explicit; rather, it is the result of our best explanation of the message (Atlas and Levinson 1981) or (from a cognitive perspective) the presumption of optimal relevance (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 158). According to this latter view, a stimulus (in this case the representation of the woman and the quote next to her) is presumed to be the most relevant one, namely the one that can yield more contextual effects (that is more informative) with the least processing effort (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 123–125). Concerning (1), the woman is depicted next to a quote (an utterance marked to require a specific speaker), in a left-to-right reading path that calls for a relation of connectedness (Bateman 2008, 60–65). Thus, the association between two stimuli (the woman and the quote) leads to a series of questions: Who is the woman? Why is she there? Who is the author of the quote? The connection requires an explanation (otherwise the stimuli would lead to efforts without contextual/informative effects), and the most accessible (or salient, prototypical) connection between them (Giora 1998, 2003, 15–21; Wilson and Sperber 2004) is the relation of speech production, as it would provide an answer to all the questions at the same time.

The same mechanism can be applied to the voice attribution in (2)–(7): in lack of a stronger stimulus, the entity that is less effortly identifiable as responsible for these utterances is the airline company (TAP) that sponsors the message, which addresses the prototypical readers (the potential customers), including the woman represented in the picture. This interpretation is made accessible to the reader through the page layout, which distinguishes the foreground (the quote and the woman) from two distinct fields or pictorially distinguished units—the one constituted by the logo “TAP Plus” and (2)–(6), and the one including the logo “TAP” and (7). These two areas are perceived as a coherent unity, calling for an explanation that is retrieved with the minimum effort based on our heuristics of pattern perception and relations of content (Bateman 2008, 58–60; 110).

This information can be used for complementing the “logical form” or semantic representation of the (highly elliptical) utterances 1–7 to determine the complete propositions that they express.

## 4.2 Explicatures: Polyphony

The first step in the specification of the representations of the implicit messages expressed by the advertisement is to identify the viewpoints and the corresponding dialogical entities. A clear distinction can be drawn based on the visual hints provided. While (1) can be easily attributed to the woman depicted on the left, (2)–(7) represent a viewpoint of the airline company (TAP) which is represented through its logo on the bottom right of the ad and on the side of (2)–(5). Based on the foregoing, we can begin to represent the polyphony of the statements belonging to the enunciator TAP, which corresponds also to the locutor. The reconstruction of the polyphony is the following:

- (2-6a) [I, TAP] 125% miles Victoria, Security and X-ray priority, Exclusive check-in priority, Priority baggage delivery. Full refund
- (7a) [I, TAP] Board in freedom of choice. 1 flight, 5 different ways to travel. TAP discount. TAP basic. TAP classic. TAP plus. TAP executive

In contrast with (2)–(7), the polyphony of (1), the most evident verbal element in the advertisement, is more complex. The first and most apparent characteristic (apart from the typographic elements) that distinguishes (1) from the other utterances is the presence of the quotation marks, a “marked” element (Levinson 1983, chap. 6; Lyons 1995; Levinson 2000, 6) that has the primary function of indicating the reproduction of a sentence expressed in another utterance (Clark and Gerrig 1990, 769; Brendel et al. 2011b, 1; Meibauer 2014, 184). From a polyphonic perspective, this quotation identifies a second locutor (the woman,  $L_2$ ) markedly distinct from the first one (TAP,  $L_1$ ) (Ducrot 1984, 196). In this sense, the first and most important inference is that the viewpoint (commitment) expressed is an external one, which can lead to the following first enrichment:

- (1a) [I, TAP] [inform you that this woman claimed that] “Between quickness and flexibility, I [this woman] choose both.”

This polyphonic reconstruction of what is said, however, is not complete yet. The second locutor is presupposing that quickness and flexibility are considered as incompatible, as the left dislocation of the prepositional phrase “between quickness and flexibility” triggers the presupposition that the two disjuncts are considered as incompatible options (Beaver 1997; Capone 2001). The locutor then contradicts this presupposed content, claiming that she rejects the opposition.

This internal dialogue can be explained considering Ducrot’s polyphonic theory (Macagno and Capone 2016). The presupposition is attributed to a different enunciator (the *ON*) representing the common opinion—shared by the competitors and the audience. We can represent the whole polyphonic structure of the utterance as follows:

- (1b) [I, TAP] [inform you that this woman claimed that] “Between quickness and flexibility [as ON claims], I [this woman] choose both”

The woman thus acts as the enunciator  $E_1$  correcting the common ground—or rather the commitments of ON. Considering the context of a commercial advertisement produced as a business marketing strategy to compete with low-cost airlines and other providers of high-end products, it is possible to include in this ON the voice of the competitor, representing the products that it offers.

This reconstruction, however, leads to a further problem: the correction of a presupposition requires reasons (Simons 2006; Macagno and Walton 2014, chap. 5), which are not expressed in this enriched propositional form. For this reason, we need to complement the propositional form with information that specifies what is said.

### 4.3 Explicatures: Specifications

As mentioned above, the messages of the advertisement are highly elliptical, and need to be complemented with additional information that can be drawn from the visual context and the relationship between the images and the text. In particular, the utterances (2)–(7) above can be enriched by including information that allows specifying a full propositional form:

- (2-6b) [I, TAP] [state that it is possible to obtain] 125% miles Victoria, Security and X-ray priority, Exclusive check-in priority, Priority baggage delivery, Full refund [in case of flight cancellation] [through my product “TAP plus”]
- (7b) [I, TAP] [claim that you can] Board in freedom of choice [by choosing TAP as a provider of flight services] [as in] 1 flight, [you can choose among] 5 different ways to travel, [namely] TAP discount, TAP basic, TAP classic, TAP plus[, and] TAP executive

In (2–6b), the explicatures complete elliptical sentences (expressed as nominal clauses) and indicate the relationship between the sentences and “TAP plus” associated therewith. In (7b), the explicatures specify the relationship between the locutor/enunciator and the utterance and include the implicit qualification for “boarding in freedom of choice,” namely the choice of TAP as a provider of flight services. In addition, the explicatures specify the asyndetic coordination between the sentences coordinated by both commas and periods, indicating that how conjoints are coordinated (non-contrastively in this case).

The explicatures of (7b) lead to a further analysis of its polyphony, as the coordinative and subordinate relations lead to retrieving presupposed contents, which need to be attributed to an ON enunciator. This polyphony can be reconstructed as follows:

- (7c) [I, TAP] [claim that you can] Board in freedom of choice [by choosing TAP as a provider of flight services] [as in] 1 flight, [you can choose among] 5 different ways to travel [and ON says that 5 different ways to travel provide you with freedom of choice], [namely] TAP discount, TAP basic, TAP classic, TAP plus[, and] TAP executive [and ON says that they are different]

The specification of the propositional form in (1) is more complex, as it needs to take into account the relationship between the content of the reported speech and the rest of the communication attributed to the same locutor. In particular, as pointed out above, the locutor  $L_2$ /enunciator (the woman) rejects a presupposition (quickness and flexibility are presented as options commonly regarded as incompatible), but she takes for granted the reason therefor (she claims that she chooses both of them, without telling how it is possible).

Thus, the woman's rejection of the presupposition invites the readers to look for the reason why "quickness and flexibility" are not mutually exclusive for her, contrary to what is taken as commonly accepted. However, where the readers can search for the evidence leading to the solution of this riddle? The most immediate answer would be "in the rest of the advertisement," but why? Why should a quote, a part of a woman's discourse, be related to a set of utterances attributed to TAP?

To reconstruct the woman's implicit reason for rejecting the presupposition, it is necessary to consider the nature of direct quotations, and more specifically the function of the outsourced utterance and the relationship between the locutor and the enunciator's viewpoint. The starting point is the definition of a direct quotation by a Speaker ( $S$ ), which consists of the following specific elements (modified from Meibauer 2014, p. 184; Macagno and Walton 2017, chap. 1):

- i. The sentence  $\sigma$  expressed by  $S$  has a meaning  $p$ ;
- ii.  $p$  contains the reproduction  $r$  of another sentence (or sentence fragment)  $u$  meaning  $m$ ;
- iii.  $u$  had been uttered by the Original Speaker at a time preceding the one in which  $\sigma$  was uttered.
- iv. Reproduction  $r$  corresponds (is substantially identical) to the wording of  $u$ .

Based on these characteristics, we notice that (1b) represents only an aspect of the reconstruction of (1), namely the polyphonic organization of the discourse, but not the function of the quote in the text. To retrieve this dimension of the quoted text, we need to consider the relationship between the quote and the quoter's discourse (which we identified as a relationship of commercial communication).

By combining the context with the elements of a quotation, we can reconstruct the explicatures of the quoted speech. The element identified as (i) above represents the relationship between the quote and the quoter's discourse. This element leads to the following specific inferences:

- first, (1) is related to the subject matter addressed by the advertisement, namely the qualities of a TAP product (from i and the context);
- second, the woman is committed to the choice of a product guaranteeing two fundamental criteria of choice (quickness and flexibility) (from the first inference and elements ii and iv);
- third, there is a relationship between the woman's commitment and the qualities claimed in the advertisement (according to ii, (1) is the *reproduction*—i.e.



production in a specific context of dialogue  $C_2$ —of another utterance used in a different context  $C_1$ ).

From the foregoing, we can reconstruct the following explicatures:

- (1c) [I, TAP] [inform you that this woman claimed that] “[instead of choosing] Between quickness and flexibility [of an airfare product] [as ON claims], I [this woman] choose both [by purchasing the product TAP Plus].”

From this complex explicature of the direct quotation, it is possible to reconstruct the elements that constitute the reason of the rejection of the presupposition. We notice that “quickness” is a quality that can be attributed to the TAP based on the utterances (3)–(5), while “flexibility” is an element inferable from (6).

#### 4.4 Higher Order Explicatures

The last step in the reconstruction of the specific representation of the utterances expressed in the advertisement (our step 4) is the indication of their dialogical and illocutionary function in the specific communicative context in which they occur. As mentioned above, these two levels of higher-order explicatures are established through the indication of the dialogical goals of the utterances and the specific acts (the speech acts) performed by the enunciators, which identify specific commitments.

The first and most important evidence for reconstructing the higher-order explicatures (and in the dialogical function) is the discourse type, which provides a presumptive indication of the function of the utterances represented in the advertisement. Ads have the primary function of persuading to buy a product by providing reasons or emotional appeals (Cook 1992, 8), but this dialogical goal is often combined with others, the most important and frequent of which is informing (Cook 1992, 4). These indications can be used as presumptions, providing the most general categories in which we can classify the utterances in lack of further evidence.

Considering the polyphony of the utterances, we can draw a distinction between (2)–(7) and (1), as the former present an act by the locutor-enunciator, while the latter represents an act of the second locutor used for a different purpose by the first locutor. In (2)–(7), the TAP-enunciator can be considered as providing reasons for justifying the choice of buying the product (a decision made explicit by (1) and emerging from the discourse type of advertising).

The dialogical moves can be analyzed by combining this information with the other essential element of a dialogue, the interlocutor. For the potential buyer of the product (the readers of the advertisement), the statements (2)–(7) provide information on the product, as the advantages offered are presumed not to be known. However, for the woman in the picture, they constitute the background information (what she already knows) and thus do not play any significant role. From a dialogical perspective, these statements are thus intended to share fundamental information to the readers—they are information-sharing moves (Walton 1989, 8; Macagno and Bigi 2017).

The analysis of (1) is more complex, due to its polyphony. The woman acting as the Original Speaker provides information to an imaginary interlocutor. Her original context is not described or depicted, so the only assumption that we can draw is that she is sharing a piece of information concerning her present and past decisions. Again, this move can be classified as information sharing. However, the use of this utterance in a quotation by TAP performs a different function. The locutor  $L_1$  is not simply informing the reader of what the woman chooses; TAP is using this information for justifying a recommendation implicit in the type of communication (an advertisement) and made explicit in (7). In this sense, TAP is providing reasons that are supporting the desirability of a product—a move that can be classified as persuasive.

Utterance (7) has a different syntactical and dialogical structure. It is an imperative, which leads stereotypically to relate it to an invitation to act. In this specific context, (7) expresses an invitation to purchase a specific product for a series of reasons, listed in the following nominal sentences. For this reason, we can classify it as a decision-making move, different from (1) as its primary function is to recommend an action, while (1) was used to support a quality of a product.

The determination of the dialogical intentions helps identify the specific speech acts that are performed through the utterances. Also at the level of illocutionary force, (1)–(6) need to be distinguished from (7), where the latter expresses a directive (a suggestion) while the former expresses assertions. However, we notice that (2)–(6) cannot be considered as merely assertions, as they do not describe a state of affairs independent of the speaker—in contrast, they represent future actions of the speaker that are shared with the addressee to pursue a specific dialogical goal. By uttering (2)–(6), the TAP-enunciator incurs specific responsibilities (providing certain future services) as a result of the interlocutor's purchase of a product (Searle 1976, 11; Vanderveken 1991, 106–109). In this sense, they can be conceived as commissive acts, which need to be related to the writing “TAP Plus” placed next to them.

The relevance relation (Macagno 2018) that can be retrieved corresponds to a qualification (in Toulmin's sense of a limitation of a conclusion, Toulmin 1958): the writing expresses the general circumstance in which (2)–(6) obtain. Therefore, the writing “TAP Plus” limits the commitments to the specific condition that they occur only when the product (information contextually inferred) TAP Plus is purchased. Based on the foregoing, we can represent the enrichment of the aforementioned statements as follows:

- (2-5c) [I, TAP] [offer] 125% miles Victoria, Security and X-ray priority, Exclusive check-in priority, Priority baggage delivery [if you buy my product “TAP plus”]  
 (6c) [I, TAP] [guarantee] Full refund [in case of flight cancellation] [if you buy my product “TAP plus”]

These utterances are used for understanding the elliptic message of (1), which implicitly refers to (2)–(6) to pursue its informative/persuasive goal:

- (1d) [I, TAP] [inform you that this woman claimed that] “[instead of choosing] Between quickness and flexibility [of an airfare product] [as ON claims], I [this woman] choose both [by purchasing TAP Plus] [and ON claims that TAP Plus provides at the same time quickness and flexibility].”

Finally, the speech act associable with (7) can be considered as a warranted suggestion, specified by the further nominal sentences. This utterance can be enriched as follows:

- (7d) [I, TAP] [suggest you to] Board in freedom of choice [by choosing TAP as a provider of flight services] [as in] 1 flight, [you can choose among] 5 different ways to travel [and ON says that 5 different ways to travel provide you with freedom of choice], [namely] TAP discount, TAP basic, TAP classic, TAP plus[, and] TAP executive [and ON says that they are different]

This analysis brings to light the complex system of commitments that these utterances display. The locutor TAP uses strategically the different voices to limit its commitments to a limited number of propositions. While the ad expresses and presupposes several messages (which we represent in the list below), the locutor becomes committed to only four of them. The rest is attributed to discourse entities that are either different from it (the woman) or include it (the common voice ON). In the first case TAP does not carry any commitment; in the second case, TAP is committed as part of the common opinion to which also the audience belongs—diluting and distributing the commitment. The commitment structure can be represented as follows:

- i. *TAP*: Upon purchase of the product “TAP plus,” we are offering 125% miles Victoria, security and X-ray priority, exclusive check-in priority, and priority baggage delivery.
- ii. *TAP*: Upon purchase of the product “TAP plus,” we are guaranteeing full refund in case of flight cancellation.
- iii. *TAP*: You should board in freedom of choice by choosing TAP as a provider of flight services.
- iv. *TAP*: You can choose among 5 different ways to travel: TAP discount, TAP basic, TAP classic, TAP plus, and TAP executive.
- v. *Common ground*: TAP discount, TAP basic, TAP classic, TAP plus, and TAP executive are different (alternative) ways to travel.
- vi. *Common ground*: 5 different ways to travel provide the purchaser with freedom of choice.
- vii. *Woman*: I choose both quickness and flexibility because I choose a TAP product.
- viii. *Common ground*: TAP plus provides quickness and flexibility at the same time.
- ix. *Common ground*: Usually airfare products provide either flexibility or quickness.

The reconstruction of the explicatures, the higher order explicatures (dialogical intentions), and the presuppositions allows the determination of the specific commitments that are expressed in the advertising message. However, without the analysis of the polyphonic structure, the strategy of the message is incomplete. The commitments need to be attributed to their corresponding discourse entities, which in our example are distinct from the sponsor of the ad. TAP commits itself only to three information-sharing messages (i, ii, iv) and a deliberation one (iii), leaving to the common voice (the ON) the responsibility for the potentially more controversial claims (vi, ix) and to the woman the description of the qualities and the advantages of TAP Plus.

These commitments can be used for a further level of analysis, focused on the reconstruction of the further inferences that can be drawn from the explicitly conveyed message and the context.

#### 4.5 Further Argumentative Inferences

The reconstruction of what the locutor said can be used to retrieve the further inferences that can be drawn from its combination with the context. In this specific product advertisement produced by the enterprise, the intent is to convince the addressee to travel with this airline because it offers a better product than the Low-Cost airlines for this specific client. The decision-making move is made explicit in (7), but it is related to (1), which is further backed by (2)–(6). This relationship between the moves can be reconstructed as a complex argumentative structure, which we can represent in the following Fig. 4.

This diagram maps the argumentative connection between the implicit and explicit commitments of the advertisement (the boxes). Such connections are represented graphically as arrows leading from some boxes to others, where the former can be conceived as the premises of the conclusions that the latter instantiate. The grey boxes represent the “warrants,” or rather the premises that guarantee the passage from premise to the conclusion. The explicit utterances are represented in boxes with solid lines, and are distinguished from the implicit (common ground) commitments, included in boxes with dotted lines. Two of these implicit commitments are the conclusions of implicit arguments triggered by the explicit utterances (indicated in boxes with shadows).

In this Fig. 4, these commitments are combined with their dialogical functions, namely *advancing a proposal* (the purpose of TAP’s move (7)) and *providing further reasons* for it (the goal of TAP’s quote (1)). These reasons are in turn supported by the information (2–6) presupposed by the woman but provided to the readers. These dialogue moves identify two patterns of reasoning used for decision-making purposes (Walton 2009; Macagno 2015; Macagno and Walton 2015), namely the argument from consequences and the argument from practical reasoning (Macagno and Walton 2018).

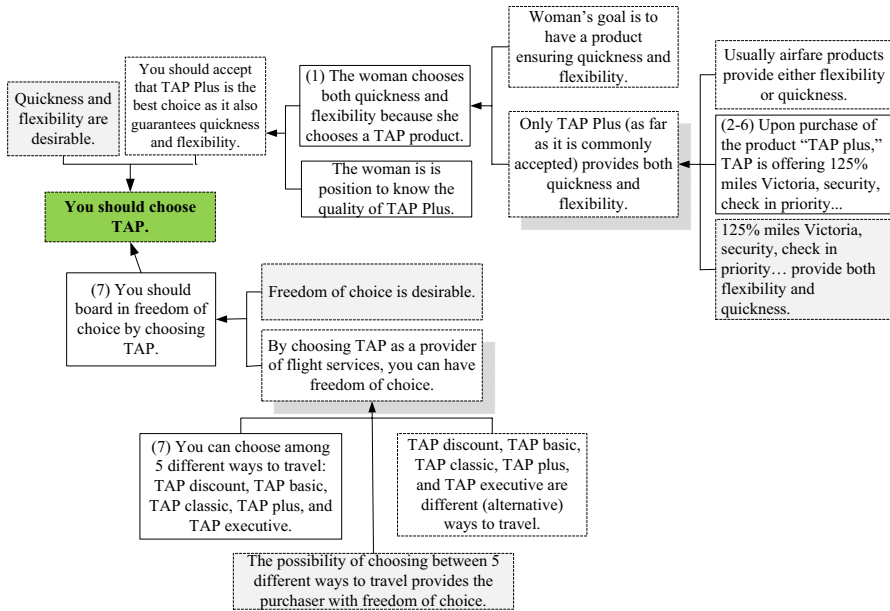


Fig. 4 Argumentative relations between the utterances in Case Study 1

The first pattern is an argument that leads from the positive consequences of a product (classified as “freedom of choice”) to the decision of purchasing it. This argument has the following structure (Walton et al. 2008, 332):

Argumentation scheme 1: Argument from consequences

PREMISE 1	If Agent A brings about (doesn't bring about) B, then C will occur
POSITIVE CONSEQUENCE PREMISE	C is a good outcome (from the point of view of A's goals), and good outcomes should be aimed at by bringing about their causes.
CONCLUSION	Therefore, B should not/should (practically speaking) be brought about.

In this advertisement, the action B is “to choose TAP (as a provider of flight services),” and the positive consequence is “to have freedom of choice (in the products offered),” leading to the conclusion “TAP should be chosen as a provider of flight services (or “You should board in freedom of choice by choosing TAP).” Clearly, this reasoning can be acceptable only by assuming that “freedom of choice is desirable,” a premise that we indicated in the grey box at the center of Fig. 4. This premise is supplemented by the nature of the phrase used, which is considered as “emotive” as commonly associated with positive connotations and inferences (Macagno and Walton 2014). This type of emotive phrase works as an implicit question-begging epithet (Bentham 1824, 213): instead of providing the reasons for making a specific choice (why freedom of choice matters when it comes to choosing a flight), by using some emotive terms (such as “freedom of choice”), the speaker can take the very disputable premise for granted.

The second crucial type of reasoning involved in the classification of the choice of TAP (and the options that it offers) as “freedom of choice” (this statement is indicated in a shadowed box as an implicit conclusion of an argument). The speaker is providing a specific reason for reaching this conclusion, expressed in the nominal clauses of utterance (7). The type of reasoning falls under the type of argument from classification (Walton et al. 2008, 319):

## Argumentation scheme 2: Argument from classification

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PREMISE 1:	If some particular thing $a$ can be classified as falling under verbal category $P$ , then $a$ has property $Q$ (in virtue of such a classification).
PREMISE 2:	$a$ can be classified as falling under verbal category $P$ .
CONCLUSION:	$a$ has property $Q$ .

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In this case, the classification  $Q$  is “to provide freedom of choice,” which is attributed to TAP based on the premise linking it to the property  $P$  “to offer the possibility of choosing between 5 different ways to travel.” This link is represented in the bottom grey box of Fig. 4.

The third explicit argument that we can find in this advertisement is the one underlying the woman’s statement. The woman is making explicit the reason that led her to purchasing TAP Plus, namely the relationship between her goal (to have both quickness and flexibility) and what TAP Plus offers compared to the other options. This type of reasoning can be represented as follows (adapted from Walton et al. 2008, 96):

## Argumentation scheme 3: Instrumental practical reasoning

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GOAL PREMISE	The goal of agent $A$ is to bring about $G$ .
ALTERNATIVES PREMISE	$A$ reasonably considers the given information that each one of $[B_0, B_1, \dots, B_n]$ is sufficient to bring about $G$ .
SELECTION PREMISE	$A$ has selected one member $B_i$ as an acceptable, or as the most acceptable sufficient condition for $G$ .
PRACTICALITY PREMISE	Nothing unchangeable prevents $A$ from bringing about $B_i$ as far as $A$ knows.
CONCLUSION	Therefore, $A$ should bring about $B_i$ .

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The woman is taking for granted (attributing to the ON enunciator) that usually flexibility and quickness are alternative options in the purchase of an airfare product. This implicit premise is contrasted with the explicit one, in which the list of the advantages of TAP Plus (or the commitments of TAP associated with the purchase of this product) is provided. This list would be irrelevant to the woman’s assertion unless a crucial tacit classificatory premise is reconstructed, namely the presupposed content that these advantages provide both quickness and flexibility (indicated in the grey box on the right of Fig. 4). This premise is attributed to the ON enunciator, as it can be considered as common knowledge that priority (security, check in, baggage delivery) guarantees quickness, while full refund (in case of flight cancellation) results in flexibility. This classificatory argument leads to classifying TAP Plus as providing “quickness and flexibility.” This classification is combined with another implicit premise, attributed again to the ON enunciator, namely that normally airfare products provide either quickness or flexibility, leading to the conclusion that “*only* TAP Plus provides quickness and flexibility.”

This premise is combined with the woman’s goal, leading to an implicit “selection premise” of the kind: “TAP Plus is the only available sufficient condition for the selected goal (obtaining quickness and flexibility).” The outcome of this reasoning is the fully enriched semantic representation of (1).

This argument leads to a further implicit but fundamental argument, which connects the woman's argument with the rest of the advertisement. The woman's reasoning is used by the locutor for a specific purpose, namely supporting the conclusion "You should choose TAP (or a TAP product)." Considering the communicative function of the ad, the woman's statement can be interpreted as a means—or a premise—for a further conclusion. The only type of support that it can provide is an "external" support, i.e., an argument whose force lies in the authority of its source (*S*'s claim should be accepted because we can trust *S*) (Macagno and Walton 2015).

In this case, the woman (or more precisely the businesswoman, as it is possible to infer from her clothes) can be considered as a person in a position to know, one who has experienced this type of product before and can testify to its quality (Walton 2010). This type of argument can be represented as follows (Walton et al. 2008, 89):

Argumentation scheme 4: Argument from position to know

PREMISE 1	Source <i>a</i> is in a position to know about things in a certain subject domain <i>S</i> containing proposition <i>A</i> .
PREMISE 2	<i>a</i> asserts that <i>A</i> is true (false).
CONCLUSION	<i>A</i> is true (false).

This argument from position to know leads to the conclusion that "You should accept that TAP Plus is the best choice as it also guarantees quickness and flexibility at the same time." This implicit conclusion can be used in the last type of reasoning involved, namely the one linking the woman's reasoning to the potential purchaser's—the reasoning invited by the locutor. The woman's argument would be pointless unless based on a premise shared by the potential customers—the goal premise "obtaining quickness and flexibility when purchasing an airfare product is desirable." Based on this goal premise (suggested by the woman's reasoning and represented in the grey box at the left corner of Fig. 4) and the selection premise (implicit in the woman's reasoning), the readers can conclude by practical reasoning that they should choose TAP Plus to obtain their sought-after advantages.

As illustrated in Fig. 4, two lines of reasoning are pursued in this advertisement. The first, which we reconstructed as an argument from consequences, supports a generic conclusion in favor of choosing TAP for its "freedom of choice." The second, represented by a chain of practical reasoning arguments, leads to the conclusion that whoever is looking for high-end products (characterized by quickness and flexibility) should opt for TAP Plus. These two conclusions address the two goals indicated at Sect. 4.1 above—addressing both competing high-end products and competing low-cost companies.

## 5 Conclusion

Multimodal argumentation in advertisement presents fundamental challenges. First and foremost, arguments have a logical and a pragmatic dimension, which needs to be reconstructed in a type of highly elliptical communication. Second,

images are normally considered to provide arguments themselves, or the context for specifying and determining the argument expressed verbally. However, how can the propositional form of an argument expressed both visually and verbally be reconstructed? What are the steps and the methods to be followed?

This paper intends to propose and illustrate a method for the reconstruction and analysis of visual arguments (and in particular arguments expressed through a double-mode) combining the tools of social semiotics, pragmatics, and argumentation theory. According to this method, an advertisement is processed through a five-step path, starting from the analysis of the context, text genre, and the images, which leads to a first representation of the messages encoded both pictorially and verbally (step 1). These first semantic representations are further enriched by including their polyphonic articulation (step 2), their specifications (explicatures) (step 3), and their dialogical functions and illocutionary forces (higher-order explicatures) (step 4). These pragmatic steps allow retrieving the commitment structure of the advertisement, which constitutes the presupposition for the further argument analysis. This latter analytical phase (step 5) involves the reconstruction of the arguments through the argumentation schemes that correspond to the conclusion envisaged and the strategy used (Macagno 2015).

This analytical method can provide specific advantages. First, it allows the systematization of the interpretative activities involved in the analysis of multimodal arguments (or at least the ones expressed through a double code). Second, it brings to light two fundamental strategic aspects of advertisements, i.e. their implicit dimension and their commitment structure. While the use of argumentation schemes leads to the retrieval of the implicit premises and conclusions of the arguments expressed, the reconstruction of the polyphonic articulation of the messages allows identifying the responsibilities that the entity responsible for the advertisement is taking on and the ones that it attributes to other discourse characters, including the “common opinion.” The two aspects above make this approach potentially applicable to the analysis of predominantly or purely visual advertisements (Tseronis and Forceville 2017b). While this paper focused on the linguistic elements, it illustrates a method for retrieving the rhetorical structure and the implicit information that can be used also for interpreting messages that rely minimally on the verbal dimension. This hypothesis, however, needs to be tested through further studies.

Finally, this approach can allow specific and quali-quantitative analyses, providing analytical categories that can result in quantifiable elements, such as the number and the type of arguments, the types of commitments, the number of presupposed propositions, etc. These quantifications can be useful for investigating differences between ads sponsoring different types of products (such as the commercial and the non-profit or governmental ones) or advertorials in different cultures.

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