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Multimodal Arguments in the Mainstream Press: Illustrating Portrayals of Migration

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Abstract: This paper sketches a methodological integration of tools from multimodal discourse analysis and argumentation in order to unveil opaque argumentative inferences emerging in multimodal configurations (i.e., headlines and press photos) of seemingly non-argumentative genres such as news articles. We offer illustrative examples from the Italian mainstream press in the context of the so-called European ‘refugee crisis.’ Overall, our methodologically oriented proposal aims to deepen the debate in the area of multimodal argumentation. To that end, we sketch a dialogue with other perspectives that specifically study argumentative inference in multimodal configurations. We contend that this approach enables a better examination of the argumentative potential that is implicitly sustained in multimodal configurations of news articles.

Keywords: argumentation in discourse, Argumentum Model of Topics (AMT), headlines, inference, Italian press, Key Component (KC) table, multimodality, news articles, press photographs, refugee crisis

1. Introduction

In the past years, studies that view argumentation as being realized by the interplay of different semiotic modes appear to be flourishing (see Kjeldsen, 2015; Tseronis & Forceville, 2017; Rocci & Pollaroli, 2018b; Tseronis & Pollaroli, 2018). Scholars of multimodal argumentation attempt to analyze the ways standpoint-argument couples are developed by the interplay of language, image, sound, and so forth, in cases of real-life argumentation (see e.g., Kišiček, 2015; Tseronis 2015, 2017; Groarke, 2018). Thus, a special focus on “visual and multimodal manifestation of arguments has emerged and developed into a field of inquiry” (Rocci & Pollaroli, 2018a, p. 1). Within this field of studies, this paper aims to unveil the opaque argumentative dynamic of multimodal configurations, realized by the interrelation of headlines and press photographs in news articles coming from the Italian mainstream press.

In line with studies, which demonstrate that news articles may be the site where micro-argumentative moves arise (see Greco Morasso, 2012), we claim, that the headline-image interplay “if interpreted within their contextual background, ... can trigger argumentative inferences” (Serafis et al., 2019). In our analysis, before focusing on the interplay of the headline and the press photo that accompanies it, we take also into consideration the content of the article as background information that helps us interpret the headline and photo combinations.

We draw on Amossy’s (2010) assumption that *argumentativity* may be borne out even in apparently non-argumentative discursive structures. Under this premise, we sketch an integration that derives tools from multimodal discourse analysis (Barthes, 1977; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; Van Leeuwen, 2008) and argumentation studies (Tseronis & Forceville, 2017; Tseronis & Pollaroli, 2018; Rocci & Pollaroli, 2018b), which particularly focus on inference in argumentation (Rigotti & Greco, 2019). We then sketch a dialogue with other perspectives that study argumentative inference in multimodal configurations (see Groarke, 2015; 2017), aiming to deepen the discussion in the field of multimodal argumentation. Two selected examples will exemplify the proposed methodological approach. In terms of context, we place our investigation within the European ‘refugee crisis.’ The mobilization of migrant populations coming from countries such as Syria and Libya to Europe since the summer of 2015 gave rise to an extremely polarized context within which discourses of solidarity towards migrant populations emerged along with discriminatory and, sometimes, hatred ones (see Krzyzanowski et al., 2018).

2. Argumentation in (multimodal) discourse

Following Amossy’s (2010) theoretical premises, the first assumption of this article is that all types of public discourse encapsulate an argumentative dimension (see also Amossy, 2005). According to Amossy, there may be instances of argumentation where

“the arguer may deliberately try to persuade the addressee ... as in a debate” (Amossy, 2009b, p. 254) as well as instances where the arguer may “orient ways of looking at things and interpreting the world without putting forward any thesis ... as in an information article” (Amossy, 2009b, p. 254).

Through that prism, and drawing on Grize’s (1990, pp. 40-41) view, Amossy provides a broad definition of argumentation where the agent may argue while simply attempting “to act upon an addressee by modifying (or strengthening) his representations of the surrounding world” (Amossy 2009a, pp. 313-314). In doing so, the same author maintains that “discourse is pervaded by a general *argumentativity* [in the sense that] [i]t always answers some explicit or hidden question or at least suggests a way of looking at the surrounding world” (Amossy, 2009b: 254; our emphasis). Consequently, all instances of public discourse (e.g., media discourse) enhance an argumentative potential i.e. argumentativity, since “even discourses that [do not] disclose a manifest persuasive purpose have an underlying argumentative dimension” (Amossy, 2009a, p. 315). In fact, recent studies claim, “analysts must be equipped to deal with texts that suggest standpoints without stating the explicit argumentative relationships between different textual elements” (see Herman & Serafis, 2019, p. 375; see also Herman, 2018). As they evidence, argumentativity is a dynamic that permeate public texts, upon which micro-argumentative moves may be activated even in seemingly non-

argumentative structures, for instance in newspapers' headlines (see Serafis & Herman, 2018; Herman & Serafis, 2019).

The aforementioned theoretical premises prove to be quite important when we look at multimodal configurations with no evident argumentative function such as headlines and press photos in news articles. From different perspectives, several studies belonging to the field of multimodal discourse analysis (see Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; O'Halloran 2004; Bednarek & Caple, 2012; Bateman 2014; Jewitt, 2014), have studied the ways in which the mix of verbal and visual elements in different public texts may construct solid portrayals of reality in the sense of coherent multimodal *discourses* (see Fairclough, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). If discourse is the source of an argumentative potential, as Amossy (2010) claims, then argumentation studies could enrich the perspective of multimodal discourse analysis by providing tools that will enable us to investigate the different (in many cases implicit) standpoints produced in configurations of multimodal meaning. Simultaneously, studies belonging to multimodal discourse analysis could go deeper in analyzing multimodal configurations and the respective meaning constructions upon which multimodal argumentation is being developed. In fact, an accepted premise among studies belonging to the field of multimodal argumentation is that "argumentation and rhetoric scholars have a lot to gain from dialogue with scholars active in the field of visual and multimodal analysis" (Tseronis & Forceville, 2017, p. 15). Moreover, a scrutiny of multimodal representations could be seen as a first necessary step that would lead a further (multimodal) argumentative analysis (see Tseronis, 2015; 2017). Against this backdrop, in the present case, we will study how social agency is represented (see van Leeuwen, 2008) in multimodal configurations formed by headlines and the accompanying press photographs in news articles. We claim that scrutinizing multimodal discourse, i.e., headlines and press photos in news articles, is a first—though essential—step before moving towards the reconstruction of the argumentativity that intrinsically permeates it. We will further explain this point in section 4.

3. Argumentative inferences in multimodal discourse

The second assumption of this article is that multimodal discourses can potentially be the source where argumentative inferences can be activated (see Bateman, 2018; Serafis et al., 2019). As we perceive it, argumentation is closely related to the concept of *inference* (see Pinto, 2001; Rigotti & Greco, 2019). This assumption appears to be fundamental in cases of (mostly enthymematic) multimodal argumentation where much remains implicit and, consequently, the connection between the conclusion and its premises remains at first glance obscure.

More specifically, an accepted premise in the aforementioned studies is that in order to establish a link between a standpoint and the arguments used to support it, it is necessary to draw an *inference*. As Rigotti & Greco (2019) put it, these inferences are part of "argument(ation) schemes," namely "the structures that connect the premises to the standpoint or conclusion in a piece of real argumentation" (Rigotti & Greco, 2019, p. 208). Depending on the case, they involve different kinds of reasoning, such as establishing cause-effect relations or reasoning from analogy and so on (for a complete taxonomy see Rigotti & Greco, 2019; pp. 247-269). Moreover, in order for someone to correctly draw and accept an *inference*, one must—at least—share some contextual knowledge of the world and with the person who is arguing, both in terms of being aware of factual truths/events and in terms of values and beliefs. In other words, if one does not necessarily need to share a value, he or she

needs to be aware that a certain thing is considered of value to some people in order to leverage by way of this value when constructing an argument (for more details, see discussion of the AMT model in section 4.2 below). In the case of news articles, part of the contextual knowledge is embedded in the title, the photo as well as the content of the article itself, which readers acquire in the moment they see the news. This is why in analyzing argumentative inferences in multimodal configurations shaped by headlines and press photos in news articles, we take into consideration the content of the article. As it was already heralded in the introductory section, this can secure our interpretation, giving more co-textual background. We will further illustrate this point in section 5 (see also Serafis et al., 2019, for an application of this approach).

4. Deepening the debate on inference in multimodal argumentation


Under the above-mentioned assumptions, in this section, we firstly present seminal works that study argumentative inferences in multimodal configurations (section 4.1). Then, we present our proposal by pinpointing the research gaps we aim to fill in order to deepen the relevant debate (section 4.2).

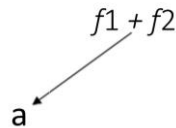
4.1. The ART approach and the Key Components (KC) table

Studying inference in multimodal argumentation, Leo Groarke’s approach, labelled as *ART*, proposes the use of what “[he] call[s] a ‘Key Component’ (KC) table and a corresponding diagram to clarify the content and structure of the argument in a particular act of arguing” (Groarke, 2015, p. 135). According to the author, “[t]he KC table does its work by isolating the key components of the act of arguing; by identifying the premises and conclusions they forward; and by providing some kind of rationale for interpreting them in the way we do” (Groarke, 2015, p. 135). In particular, the KC table “prepares the way for a discussion and evaluation of the act of arguing in question” (Groarke, 2015, p. 137). Focusing specifically on the setting of the ‘refugee crisis,’ the author provides us with evidence of how this approach may be applied while studying visual arguments in media discourse (see Groarke, 2017). He illustrates the efficiency of the KC tables by providing an example of analysis on a photo coming from the CNN (2015). In that picture, an overloaded fishing boat carrying migrants is reaching the shore of the island of Lesbos in Greece. Migrants are getting off the boat with the help of others that have already reached the shore. According to Groarke’s analysis, this photograph—part of a sequence of photos that helped sensitize the European public in front of the arrival of refugees fleeing from Syria—could give rise to a visual argument in support of the following standpoint: “We must do something to help [alleviate] the migrant crisis”. In terms of the KC table and the consequent diagram, provided by Groarke (2017), the representation of the premises-conclusion relation is the following:

Table 1

KC table - CNN photograph (adapted from Groarke, 2017)


Key Components	Role	Explanation
	Premise $f1$	Visual
“Refugees and migrants are getting off a shipping boat”	Premise $f2$	Verbal caption
“We must do something to help [alleviate] the migrant crisis”	Conclusion (a)	Verbal



However, we have two possible criticisms about how this approach is capturing the argumentative inference behind the picture-headline interplay; both have to do with the relation of this representation to the context of the argument. First, attempting an analysis based on social semiotics¹ of the meaning construction realized in the same photograph, we may arrive at a different interpretation. Following van Leeuwen’s (2008), we can firstly analyze the picture in terms of *processes* and *participants*: in the photo, a group of migrants in an overloaded boat attempts to reach the Greek shore, being assisted by others that have already landed. Therefore, we could see the participants as being “activated” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 33)—as being the active force—in the process of landing to the shore. Furthermore, on the left side of the photo, no individual is easily recognizable and, therefore, the image of an “assimilated” (see van Leeuwen, 2008, pp. 37-38) mass of people without evident individual identity/ies is represented as being activated in order to reach the shore. Moreover, in terms of interaction with the public, no individual looks to the audience and thus an exclusion of the assimilated group-‘other’ could be inferred (see van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 141). As such, the meaning construction in the same photo could give rise to a different argumentative inference in a highly polarized context such as the one of the ‘refugee crisis,’ where discriminatory racist discourses were circulating in the public sphere. We adumbrate this in terms of the following KC table:

¹ An analysis based on a different framework coming from linguistics and discourse analysis may also be applied. For instance a cognitive approach and/or an approach from a pragmatics perspective (see for instance Mazzali Lurati & Pollaroli 2016; Wildfeuer & Pollaroli 2018). We would like to pinpoint here the necessity for a multimodal discourse analysis as a step that will facilitate the analysis of multimodal argumentation (see also Tseronis 2015, for a similar claim). Concurrently, we are aware and we must also underline the fact that the absence of a caption or a title that accompanies the photo (i.e. the verbal component of the multimodal configuration) as in the case that Groarke studies, makes the analysis even more difficult.

Table 2
Our interpretation using a KC table - CNN photograph

Key Components	Role	Explanation
	Premise f_1	Visual
“A massive group of refugees and migrants is actively landing to the Greek shore”	Premise f_2	Verbal caption
“We must do something to prevent the migratory arrivals”	Conclusion (a)	Verbal

Our analysis implies that there are (at least) two plausible interpretations of the argument-standpoint relation in the same photo. We claim that an integration of tools coming from multimodal discourse-analysis could be a first step that would pave more efficiently the way to the KC table reconstruction. What ART seems to overlook (or, at least, does not include efficiently) is a profound analysis of the meaning constructed by discursive representations, which consequently activates argumentative inferences in a given context. Another missing – though crucial – aspect in this approach is that a reconstruction in terms of a KC table cannot efficiently include the contextual information, that is, mainly, the shared knowledge that the interlocutors are supposed to share as implicit premises (endoxical premises) that feed the argument-standpoint couple. However, several argumentation studies have developed a strong interest of the contextual premises that determine argumentative moves (see van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 112; van Eemeren & Peng, 2017, to name but two). In order to sufficiently include these contextual premises in the reconstruction of multimodal argumentation, next, we propose a methodological integration that combines principles of multimodal discourse analysis with the Argumentum Model of Topics (AMT) (Rigotti & Greco, 2019). In other words, as we perceive it, the integration of the principles of AMT permits us to explicate the material-contextual premises (endoxon and datum; see below), and thus brings to the fore this specific arm of the inferential passage that points the way to the “final conclusion” (see Rigotti & Greco, 2019, p. 217) that is the standpoint, which is sustained in a multimodal configuration. In this sense we see AMT as complementary to Groarke’s ART.

4.2. The Argumentum Model of Topics

The Argumentum Model of Topics (AMT) aims to reconstruct argumentative inferences in argumentative discourse (see e.g., Palmieri 2008; Greco et al., 2016, on different case

studies). In order to unveil the reasoning that binds the standpoint with its supporting argument, the AMT distinguishes two syllogistic axes that, taken together, represent “the inferential configuration” (Rigotti & Greco, 2019, p. 209) of a single argumentation. The first one presents an abstract principle (*locus*), while the second one instantiates the argument in the contextual background that the interlocutors—is supposed to—share (see Rigotti & Greco 2019, pp. 208-216 for an overview). More specifically, the so-called “procedural-inferential component” includes (a) the “*locus* as the source from which arguments are taken” (Rigotti & Greco, 2019, p. 210),²; and, (b) the “*maxim*, which represent[s] the logical principle of support of arguments” (Rigotti & Greco, 2019, p. 209) “for example: ‘if the cause is present, the effect will be present’” (Rigotti & Greco, 2019, p. 208). The second axis, namely the “material-contextual component” refers to the contextual premises that the participants (are supposed to) share. This axis includes, (a) the “endoxon”, reinterpreted from Aristotle, which “is a general premise that is accepted by the relevant public ... in a specific argumentative situation” (Rigotti & Greco, 2019, p. 214) and, (b) the “datum”, which is a “premise of a factual nature” (Rigotti & Greco, 2019, p. 215); according to these authors, “[e]ndoxon and datum are associated by a plain line meaning that they need to be taken together to infer the ‘first conclusion’” (Rigotti & Greco 2019, p. 216). The crossing of these two components (“procedural-inferential” and “material-contextual”) graphically creates a “quasi-Y structure [that is the] diagram of the inferential configuration” (Rigotti & Greco, 2019, p. 217) which is constituted by two syllogistic procedures originated by endoxon and maxim respectively. This combination leads to the “final conclusion” (Rigotti & Greco 2019, p. 217), that is the defended standpoint.³ As van Eemeren & Snoeck Henkemans (2017, pp. 55-56) pinpoint, the AMT has a specific micro-focus because it analyzes single standpoint-argument couplings. This fact makes it suitable while analyzing the micro-argumentative moves that stem from multimodal meaning constructions in headlines/press photos of news articles. This is why we employ it as a second step, interrelated with the discourse-oriented analysis of social agency (van Leeuwen, 2008) in our texts. Next, we provide representative examples of analysis.

5. Argumentative inferences in headlines-press photos’ configurations

As we already mentioned in the introductory section, for our analysis, we take into consideration (a) the content of the article before we focus on the interplay of the headline and the press photo that accompanies it; (b) the broader context in which argumentation takes place.

The first article,⁴ coming from the right-wing newspaper *Il Giornale*, portrays migrants’ mobilizations as an unsustainable and daily invasion, taking place in Italy. The newspaper compares the Italian case to other Mediterranean countries (Greece, Spain) where the landings have been reduced according to border controls. It provides data regarding the number of landings in Italy mentioning that Italy receives half of the mobilization of migrants fleeing towards Europe. It highlights that the mobilization is increased twice since 2015. The

² In other words, “[t]he locus is represented as a relationship (in medieval Latin, *habitus*, in the sense of *se habere ad*, i.e. ‘to be related to’) between two poles, such as cause-effect, analogue-analogous, definition-defined object, and so on” (Rigotti & Greco, 2019, p. 95).

³As Rigotti & Greco (2019, p. 217) put it “final conclusion and standpoint coincide in the AMT graphical representation”.

⁴ Available at: <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/cronache/profughi-fanno-rota-sull-italia-ora-sbarchi-record-140-1391437.html>(last accessed: 29.01.2020).

article concludes by reporting on the measures taken by the Italian and EU leadership in order to reduce the entrances of migrants.

Figure 1

Screenshot of *Il Giornale*, 30.04.2017

il Giornale.it cronache

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IL MALE DENTRO AUSCHWITZ

INSIDE COVER

Condividi:

Commenti: 70

Profughi fanno rotta sull'Italia Ora sbarchi da record: +140%

L'aumento registrato tra gennaio e marzo rispetto a due anni fa. Siamo l'unico Paese che non respinge

Manila Alfano - Dom, 30/04/2017 - 08:28

[commenta](#)

L' Italia è nel mirino. Ancora, sempre di più. I profughi scelgono le coste italiane. Barconi stracarichi di uomini, donne, minori che traghettano fino a qui.

Sicilia, Sardegna, Puglia. Una vera e propria invasione, costante, quotidiana, senza misura, intollerabile. Il nostro Paese come una gigantesca spiaggia libera, eletto come meta preferita. Estate, inverno, cambia poco: ormai ogni giorno è buono per mettersi in viaggio. E tentare. Qui si arriva e si trova accoglienza. Una certezza che ormai si è cristallizzata con gli interventi delle navi delle Ong. Una rotta che non è difficile sbagliare: quella giusta porta da noi. Non in Grecia dove, secondo Frontex, il numero dei profughi sbarcati è diminuito del 90% dopo l'accordo tra Ue e Turchia, non la Spagna dove i potentissimi sistemi radar e respingimenti messi in atto già dal governo socialista di Zapatero fanno la differenza e hanno di fatto azzerato gli arrivi. In Italia invece no. Il nostro di fatto è rimasto l'unico Paese accoglie invece di respingere, che apre invece di chiudere. Una porta non aperta ma spalancata. E si vede. Lo dicono i numeri. Sempre più impressionanti. Un aumento del

Editoriali

Non tutti i mali vengono per nuocere
di Alessandro Sallusti

Calendario eventi

26 Gen	Elezioni Regionali Calabria
26 Gen	Elezioni Regionali Emilia Romagna
04 Feb - 08 Feb	Festival di Sanremo 2020
12 Giu - 12 Lug	Europei 2020

Tutti gli eventi

L'opinione

Conducting the proposed analytical approach, in the headline *Profughi fanno rotta sull'Italia Ora sbarchi da record +140%* [*Refugees navigate to Italy Now landings record +140%*], migrant populations are firstly represented as an “assimilated” (van Leeuwen 2008, pp. 37-38) group, with no cultural, ethnic or other differences, as realized through the choice of the nominal type *refugees* in plural. In this sense, the newspaper avoids any reference to the place of origin, the reasons of the mobilizations. Moreover, *refugees* are “activated” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 33) undertaking the active participant role “actor” in the “material process” (see Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 260), realized by the verbal type *navigate*, which extends to

the prepositional circumstantial element *to Italy*, constructing, in this sense, the image of an active and conscious route of a solid group towards the host country. Secondly, they are represented via “aggregation” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 37) by the relevant percentage in the nominal phrase *landings record +140%*, adding to the portrayal the characteristics of a massive and active landing/arrival to Italy. In other words, according to the representation provided by the headline, a massive and active route of a solid group of foreign individuals-‘others’ is landing to Italy. This construal encodes the perception of an active and massive invasion of migrant groups in the host country, augmenting the sense of an emergency. The accompanying press photograph secures the meaning construction in the headline. In this photo, the image of an assimilated group of migrants (see van Leeuwen 2008, pp. 38-39) on board is enhanced, preventing any identification of their particular identity. “Immigrants are homogenized due to the [type of] clothes they wear” (see Martinez-Lirola 2014, p. 493, on a similar case study), they are close to the viewer and “we see [them] frontally” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 139); thus, the audience is asked to confront directly the real-life situation and not e.g. just observe it. Finally, the assimilated/activated group does not seem to look towards—interact with the audience (see van Leeuwen, 2008, pp. 140-141): in this sense, the ‘othering’-exclusion of migrants is enforced.

This meaning construction triggers inferences in an argumentative way in the relevant, polarized context: If refugees-‘others’ are consciously and massively arriving to Italy, then this action should be stopped and therefore, the migratory phenomenon should be prevented. The following inference becomes more evident if we take into consideration the beginning of the article where migration is described in terms of emergency and invasion. The standpoint-argument couple could be described in terms of the pragma-dialectics’ numeration:

1. The massive migratory phenomenon should be prevented
- 1.1. Refugees are massively arriving to Italy.

In order to secure this inferential link between the standpoint and the supporting argument, and therefore our interpretation in such an implicit micro-argumentative move in this configuration, we employ the “quasi-Y structure” provided by the AMT. On the axis of the “procedural-inferential component”, the locus would be the “locus from *termination and setting up*” (see Rigotti & Greco, 2019, pp. 263-264),⁵ which would be realized in terms of a maxim “if X is bad then X should be terminated”. On the “material-contextual component”, the endoxon would be summarized in the following lines: “a massive arrival of foreigners to a country should be avoided” and the datum (what we got from the analysis of the multimodal configuration) would be: “there is a massive arrival of refugees in Italy”. At the intersection of these two axes, the first conclusion would be “the massive arrival of refugees in Italy should be prevented” and, consequently, the final conclusion would be: the migratory phenomenon should be prevented (see figure 2).

⁵ It is worth mentioning that the “locus from termination and setting up” (Rigotti & Greco, 2019, pp. 263-264) connects a present situation with a possible alternative situation that can be generated (set up) or terminated. As such, it is very often used in public debate, especially when new policies or measures need to be evaluated against the *status quo* (see Rigotti & Greco, 2019, p. 263).

Figure 2
The AMT quasi-Y reconstruction

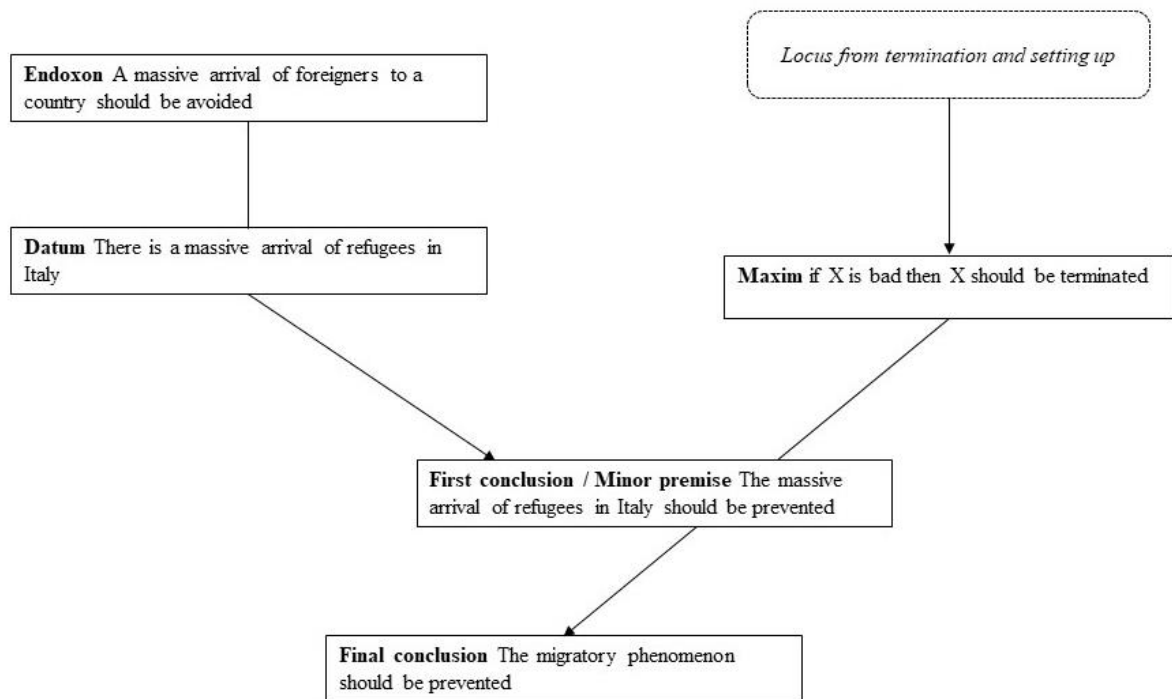


Figure 4
 Screenshot of Corriere della Sera, 29.04.2016

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FRONTIERE

Migranti, Berlino fa barriera con Vienna: «L'Italia accolga di più»

Il governo tedesco difende la chiusura del Brennero: «Roma faccia la sua parte». Secondo lo Spiegel la Ue sta preparando un piano per «centri di raccolta» in Libia

di Danilo Taino



BERLINO Era improbabile che la Germania lasciasse sola l'Austria e non aiutasse il governo di Vienna sulla questione dei migranti. Infatti, la sosterrà anche a costo di sollevare un confronto teso con l'Italia. Ieri, il ministro degli Interni tedesco, Thomas de Mazière, ha detto a Roma di rispettare gli impegni che ha preso in termini di registrazione e di fornitura di alloggio ai rifugiati e agli immigrati che arrivano, in modo che non si dirigano verso l'Europa del Nord. E ha aggiunto che il problema del Brennero è nelle mani dell'Italia, non dell'Austria.

La crisi dei migranti in sette punti

Top 10 origins of people applying for asylum in the EU
 First-time applications in 2015, in thousands

Origin	Applications (thousands)
Syria	~1400

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 Sanremo 2020, parla il nuovo direttore di RaiUno: «Io un tec...»

FOTOSINTESI
 di Brucce Sovergnini

In the second article,⁶ coming from the mainstream newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, the journalist reports on the dispute between Germany, Austria and Italy on the management and distribution of the migratory mobilizations. The article underlines the reasoning behind the EU-Turkey agreement and describes the common positioning of the German and Austrian government that attempt to prevent migratory displacements towards central Europe by pushing Italy to host new arrivals. The article concludes by referring to the assumption made by European leaders regarding the necessity for more controls at EU borders and by pinpointing that the multiple crises in Europe create disputes among EU member-states.

In the headline *Migranti, Berlino fa barriera con Vienna: «L'Italia accolga di più»* [*Migrants, Berlin creates a barrier with Vienna: «Italy should host more»*], migrant populations are, once more, represented as an “assimilated” group-mass through the choice of the nominal type *migrants* in plural. In the same headline, German and Austrian people/authorities are represented as “collectivized” entities through the use of “nouns denoting a group of people” (van Leeuwen, 2008, pp. 37-38). Moreover, the German part seem to create an alliance with the Austrian one as the actor in the material process *creates a barrier*, being “associated” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 39) through the marker *with [Vienna]* i.e. the “circumstantial of accompaniment” (see Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 262) in the relevant clause. The scope of this alliance to push Italy receiving more migratory mobilization is described in the clause *«Italy should host more»*, in quotation marks. The meaning construction could be paraphrased as follows: Germany and Austria are creating a barrier in order to push Italy to receive more migrants. The press photograph compliments the headline: the barrier and the cordon of police agents in the background of the photo creates an extra obstacle along with the foregrounded police band, which denotes a restricted area. All in all, the meaning construction underpins a viewpoint in favor of the prevention of the migratory phenomenon.

Given the fact that in the main article the columnist of the *Corriere della Sera* implies an opposition to the decisions made by the German and the Austrian authorities,⁷ the headline-photo interplay here seems invite the inference adumbrated in the following schematization:

1. We (Italy) should not host more migrants
- 1.1. Germany and Austria create a barrier

The inference that unites the aforementioned standpoint-argument coupling is scrutinized in AMT terms as follows: On the “procedural-inferential” arm, the locus would be the one *from analogy* (see Rigotti & Greco, 2019, pp. 261-262), which would be realized in terms of a maxim “if X does so then Y should do the same”. In fact, irrespectively from what Austria and Germany want Italy to do, the journalist seems to maintain that, if other countries are creating barriers against migrants, Italy should be able to proceed analogously. On the “material-contextual” arm, the endoxon would be summarized in the following lines: “countries’ borders should be protected” and the datum would be: “Germany and Austria

⁶ Available at: https://www.corriere.it/esteri/16_aprile_30/migranti-berlino-fa-barriera-vienna-c2b64778-0e30-11e6-91a4-bd67d1315537.shtml (last accessed: 05.02.2020)

⁷ It is worth mentioning here that the argument of the newspaper – the one under analysis here - is not the official argument/positioning of the German and Austrian authorities (reported in the text) but the argument of the columnist as this is being constructed by the headline-photo multimodal configuration and as further illustrated by the content of the article.

create a barrier”. At the intersection of these two axes, the first conclusion would be “we should create a barrier as Germany and Austria do” and, consequently, the final conclusion would be: We (Italy) should not host more migrants (see figure 4).

Figure 4
The AMT quasi-Y reconstruction

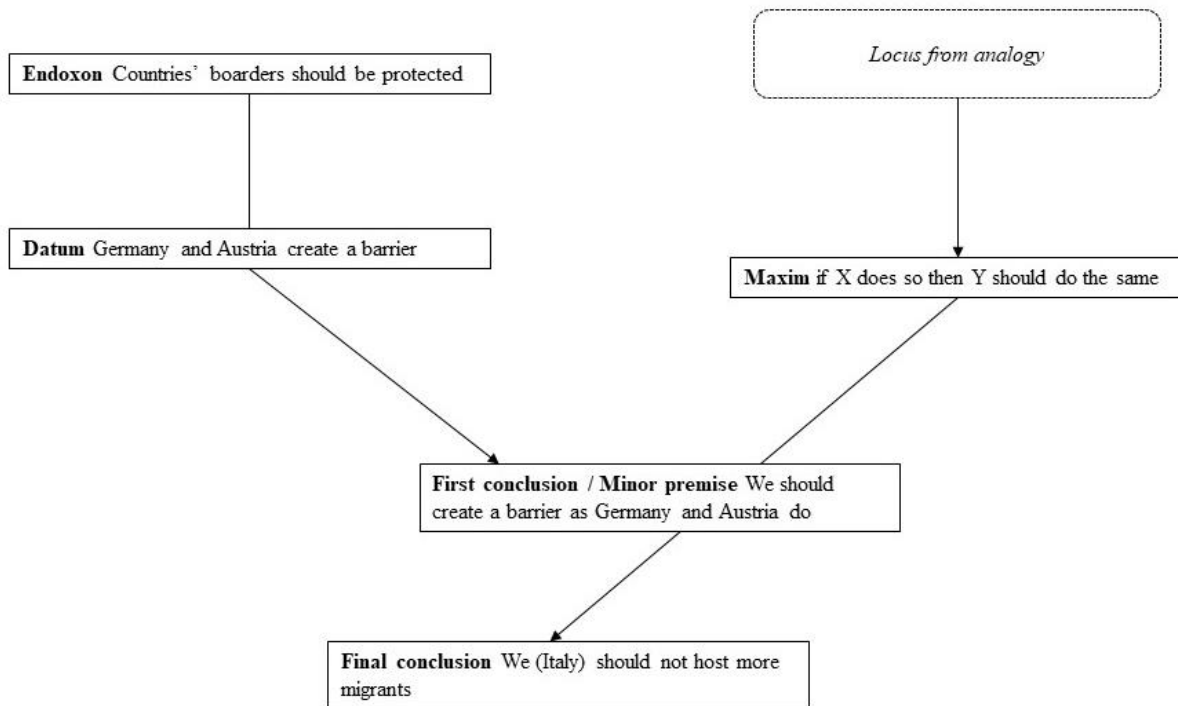


Figure 4: The AMT quasi-Y reconstruction

6. Concluding remarks

Our short analysis demonstrated that in both cases, an argumentative inference in favor of the prevention of the migratory phenomenon emerges from the multimodal interplays under scrutiny. We must underline here that since this is a methodologically oriented paper, we do not make any claim that empirical evidence could arise from this work. A more extensive examination of larger corpus of multimodal data could fulfill the restriction we explicitly acknowledge here. In terms of methodology, based on Amossy’s (2010) premise that public discourse intrinsically occupies an argumentative potential (argumentativity), we presented a proposal based on the integration of two apparatuses of analysis: Van Leeuwen’s (2008) approach for the analysis of the representation of social actors and action in multimodal configurations and the AMT (Rigotti & Greco, 2019). As we hope, it becomes evident in the light of our analysis, in the two examples, we show that each apparatus complements and extends the interpretative ability of the other. Tools from multimodal discourse analysis may scrutinize and unveil opaque meaning constructions in multimodal configurations such as

headline and press photo, being a necessary first step that will guide an analysis that seeks to find the argumentative inference triggered in (mostly enthymematic) multimodal argumentation—thus extending the multimodal discourse analysis. In this endeavor, we attempted to sketch a dialogue with seminal approaches in multimodal argumentation. In particular, we have shown how our approach may complement and deepen an approach such as the ART, presented by Groarke, paying particular attention to the intersection of the procedural-inferential and material-contextual components that may highlight the relation between the (mostly implicit) standpoint and the argument that backs up it. In this sense, we hope that the present approach may sketch a fertile dialogue in the rising field of multimodal argumentation.

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