

Multimodal Argumentation in (Pro-social) Advertising

Lecture at 2022 Training School – Public Policy Communication (COST)

While policy makers develop the arguments, it is ultimately the writers and communication designers in professional advertising agencies who construct an argumentation fit to go public. This is as true of commercial companies or brands as it is of government departments or NGOs.

The lecture will introduce advertising as a special persuasive genre, which has come a long way from explicit verbal argumentation in the 17th ct. to the minimal text-image messages of today. As these modes of communication combine in ever more ingenious ways, rhetorical techniques are required that sustain a multimodal argument

The lecture will explain and illustrate the special type of inexplicit and subtle verbo-visual argumentation we find in (pro-social) advertisements. The examples show that multimodal rhetorical figures – in particular metaphors, metonymies and puns – are important catalysts to effectively bring out the arguments.