**How Semiotic Modes Work Together in Multimodal Argumentation:
A Pattern-Based Approach**

Martin Siefkes, Chemnitz University of Technology

In the analysis of argumentation that is carried out multimodally, it is important to understand the role that different semiotic modes play, and how they are integrated into a coherent argumentation (cf. Birdsell/Groarke 2007; Wildfeuer forthcoming). Semiotic modes are variously suited for different functions of argumentation (e.g. the presentation of different types of information, the use of inference rules such as *modus ponens*, or proof strategies such as *reductio ad absurdum*, the use of rhetorical devices such as *captatio benevolentiae*, the presentation of examples, the emotional manipulation of the audience, etc.).

The affordances of different modes for functions in multimodal argumentation, however, cannot simply be based on semiotic evaluations of mode-specific affordances that have been gleaned from monomodal sign processes. Thus, images have traditionally been regarded as well-suited for illustration of an argument with examples, for emotional influences, and for contextualizing an argument; but depending on the combination with content given in other modes (e.g. language or gesture), they can fulfil other functions in multimodal argumentation as well (Tseronis 2014).

To take an example: In a trial, the visual disparity between a small defendant and a very high wall around a property he's supposed to have climbed with bare hands can be used by the defense, by presenting a photo of the defendant before the wall, as an argument for his innocence: The image can here support the visual equivalent of a *reductio ad absurdum* proof, but only if verbally given explanations supply an adequate contextualization: e.g. the visually presented objects have to be connected with referents in an act of *Intermodal deixis* ("*this* person is the defendant; *this* wall is the wall he's supposed to have climbed"). Furthermore, background knowledge necessary to draw the intended conclusion has to be supplied (e.g. "the wall has the same height all around the property").

We claim that the function of semiotic modes in multimodal argumentation cannot be determined in general, but only in specific constellations of form and content presented in both modes. Thus, a pragmatic approach to mode contributions is necessary, which considers the specific interactions between modes, depending on the formal, content, and context properties of each argumentative utterance.

To understand how modes contribute to multimodal rhetoric strategies, a pragmatic theory of multimodal argumentation will have to consider which types of interactions between semiotic modes exist, and how they influence the overall argumentative pattern. Recently, different models that describe interactions between semiotic modes have been proposed (Marsh/White 2003; Martinec/Salway 2005; Liu/O'Halloran 2009; Wildfeuer 2012). In recent work (cf. Siefkes in print), a range of intermodal interactions has been formally defined, among them Intermodal predication, Intermodal typification, and others. On the basis of examples, it will be demonstrated how this model can be used to describe the contributions of semiotic modes context-sensitively, providing an important part of the needed pragmatic theory of multimodal argumentation.

Bibliography:

Asher, N. & A. Lascarides (2003), *Logics of Conversation.* Cambridge University Press.
Birdsell, David & Leo Groarke (2007), "Outlines of a theory of visual argument". *Argumentation and Advocacy 43*: 103-113.
Bateman, J. A. (2014), *Text and Image: A Critical Introduction to the Visual/Verbal Divide.* London: Routledge.
Liu, Yu & Kay O'Halloran (2009), "Intersemiotic texture: Analyzing cohesive devices between language and images". *Social Semiotics 19(4),* 367-388.

Marsh, E. E. & M. D. White (2003), "A taxonomy of relationships between images and text", *Journal of Documentation 59(6)*, 647–672.

Martinec, R. & A. Salway (2005), "A system for image-text relations in new (and old) media", *Visual Communication 4(3)*, 339–374.

Siefkes, M. (forthcoming), "Frames in discourse. Connecting frame semantics and discourse analysis in an SDRT-based model". Submitted to *Modern Languages Open (MLO)*, March 2014.

Tseronis, A. (2014), "Argumentative functions of visuals: Beyond claiming and justifying", in: Dima Mohammed and Marcin Lewinski (eds.), *Virtues of Argumentation. Proceedings of the 10th International Conference of the Ontario Society for the Study of Argumentation.* Windsor: OSSA, 1-17.

Wildfeuer, J. (2012), "Intersemiosis in Film". *Multimodal Communication 1(3),* 276-304.

Wildfeuer, Janina (in print), "It's all about logics!? Analyzing the rhetorical structure of multimodal filmic text." *Semiotica* [Special Issue on Multimodal Rhetoric].

Keywords: