THE TIP OF THE ‘EYESBERG’

A case of multimodal website argumentation

Master’s thesis

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Tiivistelmä

Verkkoviestinnän rooli markkinointiviestinnässä on kasvanut huomattavasti viime vuosikymmeninä. Myynnin ohella uusia markkinointikanavia hyödynnetään myös positiivisten elämänarvojen ja -tapojen edistämiseen. Yksi suurimmista verkkokanavien tuomista viestinnän muutoksista on sisällön monimuotoisuus: kuvat, videot ja muut interaktiiviset elementit muodostavat nyt huomattavan suuren osan verkkovälitteisen viestinnän rakenteesta.

Tämä tutkimus pohjaa multimodaaliseen argumentaatioteoriaan tutkiessaan erilaisia tapoja, jolla terveysedisteistä markkinointiviestiä välitetään verkkosivuviestinnässä. Tutkimuksen keskiössä on erimuotoisten sisältöjen yhteisesti välittämä viesti ja verkkosivupohjan luomat mahdollisuudet muutokseen perinteisessä argumentoinnin rakenteessa. Metaforaan pohjautuvaa sisältöä tarkastellaan diskurssintutkimuksen keinoin heijastaen sen visuaalisia, verbaalisia ja interaktiivisia elementtejä Deganon (2013) pragma-dialektiseen malliin verkkosivun argumentaatiorakenteesta.

Tutkimuksen teoreettisena lähtökohtana on mm. Forcevillen (2010) ja Tseronisin (2018) näkemys multimodaalisen argumentoinnin rakenteesta kokonaisuutena, ei yksittäisinä, selkeiksi moodeiksi jaettavina palasina. Laadullinen analyysi osoittaa moodien yhteistoiminnan oleellisesti rakentavan argumentoivaa retoriikkaa verkkosivulla ja arvioi sen roolia argumentaatioteoriassa ja markkinointiviestinnässä. Tulokset osoittavat, että visuaalisten ja hypertekstuaalisten rakenteiden hyödyntäminen sanallisen viestinnän ohella luo mahdollisuuksia tehokkaampaan ja monipuolisempaan markkinointiretoriikkaan sekä luo käyttäjälle mahdollisuuksia osallistua virtuaalisesti argumentaatioprosessiin. Tutkimustuloksista on käytännön strategista hyötyä niin verkkoviestinnän suunnittelijoille kuin sen kuluttajillekin.

Asiasanat: argumentointi, multimodaalisuus, markkinointiviestintä, verkkoviestintä

Säilytyspaikka

Muita tietoja

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1 Introduction

In 2020, it is hard to image daily life without technology. We use computerised tools to exercise, shop for groceries and form relationships. It is possible to complete a university degree online or do your job under a palm tree in Maui. The integration of technology into our everyday lives has meant a big change in the way we communicate. Grammatically correct sentences have been replaced by internet vernacular and emotions are expressed through millions of emoji and GIFs. The way we see and interpret the world has changed, most likely for good. What used to be a book might now be a video or a website. Something that might have been best communicated in writing 100 years ago, now translates better in images.

Change has always been a part of language development and communication, and it remains a field with unlimited research potential. Every couple of months, hundreds of new words are added into the Oxford English Dictionary. With the rise of social media, an endless supply of new data to analyse is created every single day. Research on online media ranging from news outlets to advertising has gained prominence in the past couple of decades and does not show signs of slowing down. Research has looked at how technology has changed human-to-human interaction – often referred to as computer-mediated communication, or CMC (Herring, 1996; Thurlow et al., 2004) –, including one-to-one communication and different types of mass communication. There have been studies on how the internet has changed the language we use, the relationships we have and the way we spend our spare time.

Along with everything else, the rise of online media has taken business and marketing to a whole new level. The internet has made it easier than ever to find communities of people interested in a particular topic, and this has not gone unnoticed by the business-savvy. It is now possible reach millions of people at once and send tailored and targeted ads to exactly the right people with the click of a button. While the biggest marketing budgets are likely still spent on advertising that drives business, this development has also paved way for smaller organisations, namely NGOs and not-for-profit organisations to easily find their audience to communicate their values as well. This type of marketing communication that aims to provoke a positive change in behaviour has come to be known as *social marketing*.

Language is an important tool of connecting and communication and as such, plays an important role in marketing communication and advertising as well. Therefore, it is only logical that along with the growth of online marketing, research on marketing communication in a CMC context has also increased. Many recent studies overlap with business, argumentation or communication studies, and the combination of text and visual elements is often at the core of many marketing campaigns (Forceville 2010; Pérez-Sobrino, 2016, Rocci et al., 2018). With the interactive opportunities brought on by online platforms and web design capabilities, a need for a more in-depth perspective to study the communicative capabilities of the hypertextual web space arose. It is no longer a question of images or text as standalone units or together as a linear, structured entity; the study of multimodality (Kress, 2010) provides opportunities to review content in a whole new order. To further explore the capabilities and opportunities of influence in different combinations of semiotic systems, multimodal argumentation (Forceville, 2010; Tseronis and Forceville, 2017; Tseronis, 2018), a fairly new research perspective stemming from the studies of argumentation, discourse and semiotics has been established in the 2000s to help researchers explore and answer some of the questions inspired by the new media. By combining methods of multimodal discourse analysis to assess and evaluate the verbal and visual tools of persuasion with argumentative models to analyse the structure and process of delivering a clear message, the study of multimodal argumentation allows an in-depth look at the elements of the hypertextual environment that influence us.

Having accumulated professional working experience in marketing communications for some years, this is a natural research topic for me to be interested in. With a background in linguistics, my focal point has often been the communicative aspect of advertising and marketing, putting emphasis on the semiotic choices that are made in trying to influence people. Social marketing in particular stands out over sales-driven marketing activity in the sense that the aim is often to make a long-lasting positive impact on the individual or the society, and the role of communicative choices can make a huge difference to either direction.

The present study aims to explore the ways in which multimodal communication can be utilised in a marketing context, particularly from the perspective of argumentation. The data consists of a marketing campaign website promoting eye health and the importance of early intervention in preventing vision loss. Promoting behaviour that is beneficial for individual or collective health is one of the key causes of social marketing (Lee and Kotler, 2016), so further research on the topic can be useful for practitioners of social marketing. The visual and verbal narrative of the campaign is built around a metaphorical concept, which provides an additional level of intrigue into the analysis

both on the levels of discourse and argumentation. The website environment is a very clear manifestation of multimodality in the CMC space (Bateman et al., 2017) and provides a defined yet sufficiently large data set to illustrate the argumentative structure of the campaign. Additionally, the website contains many of the key visual and verbal elements of the campaign and exceptionally demonstrates the hypertextual possibilities of the CMC space, providing value for the multimodal analysis.

Multimodality has been a topic of interest in research for a couple of decades, and notable theories have been presented by researchers like Kress (2010, 2014). Similarly, systematic theories of argumentation have been established to analyse argumentative discourse, particularly visibly by the pragma-dialectical school established by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2003). In research, these two fields have yet to find a clear common ground. In 2018, Tseronis presented the view that in multimodal argumentation, there has been too little focus on multimodality and its impact on argumentative discourse, and the focus is too often split between the visual and the verbal as separate units.

To further contribute to this emergent field, the present study draws from the aforementioned theories of argumentation and multimodality, among others, together with methods of multimodal discourse analysis and multimodal metaphors to present a thorough exploration of the characteristics and possibilities of multimodal argumentation in the presented case. The entire campaign website is analysed in terms of the visual, verbal and hypertextual elements that contribute to building an argument. It is presented that the argumentative narrative is communicated through multimodal discourse within the frame of a complex multimodal metaphor, which is analysed in terms of its contribution to the argumentative rhetoric. The full data set is analysed through the framework of the argument it aims to communicate, and then reflected against an adaptation of the pragma-dialectical model of argumentation, created by Degano (2013) based on van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2003) original theory. The elements and the structure of the argument are reviewed in the context of the computer-mediated website space, highlighting its unique features and opportunities for multimodal argumentation.

At the end of the analysis, the reader will have a clearer view of how the multimodal elements function as a cohesive unit and how each of them contributes to one another in the web space to create the argumentative discourse. The present study does not aim to analyse the efficiency or cohesion of the argument, but to provide a deeper understanding of the elements that contribute to the rhetoric in such

an environment. The central aim of the study can be summarised in Forceville's (2010: 43) words: "A central question in the analysis of multimodal discourse is -- how the overall effect is more than the sum of the parts."

Through the analysis, the study aims to further explore the possibility of the existence of a multimodal argument over simply visual or verbal arguments and understand the opportunities it creates for online marketing discourse, where multimodal argumentation is often prominent and effective.

The organisation of the present study moves from the macro- to the microlevel and back. The theoretical background is presented starting from perspectives of CMC and marketing as the larger context through to studies of argumentation and multimodality, and finally focussed on the most microscopic level of the analytical background with a look into the studies of metaphors and discourse. In contrast, the analysis follows a bottom-to-top pattern, by first thoroughly characterising and analysing the multimodal and metaphorical elements of data through methods of discourse analysis, and then pulling it all back together into the bigger picture by framing the findings within the argumentative structure.

The first chapter of the current study presents its context. First, social marketing is presented as the contextual background for the campaign being analysed. Next, the field of computer-mediated communication and the impact it has had on communication and research is briefly presented. It is followed by a look at how this development has changed the course of marketing and further by how the website plays a fundamental role and impacts the discourse. Through these chapters, the specific features of marketing and website discourse that affect the nature of the data are clarified.

Once the contextual space has been established, Chapter 3 takes a look at theories of argumentation and multimodality. Both concepts are introduced, after which the focus will shift into the field of multimodal argumentation and its use in the marketing context in particular.

In Chapter 4, the roles of multimodal discourse analysis and multimodal metaphors are explored as key analytical tools for the study. Moving on to Chapter 5, the specific research questions and further reasoning for them are presented, along with the aims of the research as well as a presentation of the data and the full analytical framework.

Chapter 6 contains the analysis, starting on the level of discourse. The analysis is concluded with a review of the elements, their metaphorical functions and most importantly, their role in the multimodal argumentative discourse. In the final chapters, conclusions of the study are presented along with further discussion exploring the findings, their significance and implications for further research on the topic. At the end of the paper, the potential of multimodal elements in argumentative online marketing discourse will have been established.

2 Websites in social marketing

This chapter serves as an introduction to the concepts that contribute to the highest level of context of the present study. Chapter 2.1 starts by presenting some basic concepts of social marketing as far as it is relevant for creators of marketing discourse within this framework. Chapter 2.2 offers an introduction to the study of computer-mediated communication and details how it has influenced human interaction and discourse analysis. In characterising the new opportunities for linearity, modality and methods of communication enabled by this change, a groundwork is built for the final subchapter, which focuses on the digital marketing space and the website's role in digital communication in particular, establishing the specific context for the data analysed in the present study.

2.1 Marketing for change: tools and views of social marketing

The data analysed in the present study consists of a marketing campaign website. As a key difference to a typical marketing website, the content of the site aims not only to drive business revenue, but also to make an impact on the content consumer's life by improving their health and consequently, the quality of the rest of their lives. This type of marketing activity is known as *social marketing*. While it is not relevant to go into detail about marketing research for the contextual background of the present study, this chapter serves as a brief introduction into the basic concepts that are at the core of the data, and most importantly, the relevance of conducting this type of research from a multimodal perspective.

2.1.1 Basic concepts of social marketing

Social marketing is a specific discipline within the marketing spectrum with a focus on promoting and improving beneficial behaviours (Lee and Kotler, 2016: 8). Among others, typical fields of interest include health, safety and injury prevention, preserving the environment, and contributions to the enhancement or wellbeing of communities (Lee and Kotler, 2016: 2). The use of practices of social marketing is particularly common in the context of public health (Lefebre, 2013: 14), where it started around the 1960s, despite not yet being fully recognised by academics at the time (Basil, 2019: 5). It was distinguished as an academic field in the 1970s but research has found exponentially more potential through the internet (Degano, 2013: 102). From a practical perspective, the rise of the

internet has allowed not-for-profit organisations – with considerably smaller budgets than corporations – to reach out to masses of people (Degano, 2013: 97), paving way for more social marketing activity.

Social marketing makes use of the tools and concepts of commercial marketing in an effort to influence a change in consumer mindset or behaviour (Basil, 2019: 5). In this sense, social marketing bridges the gap between business and human sciences by using lessons from the corporate world to reinforce behavioural models that are generally considered "good" (Lee and Kotler, 2016: 12). The goal for a social marketing campaign is usually to influence by encouraging changing, rejecting, accepting or modifying behaviours (Lee and Kotler, 2016: 8). According to some definitions, it might also aim to increase knowledge or change beliefs, but modern definitions distinguish this as the task of education and emphasise the behavioural aspect as key to social marketing (Basil, 2019: 6). In the early 2010s, the International Social Marketing Association included the implementation of research and theory as one of the key characteristics of social marketing (Morgan, 2017). Researchers in the field also emphasise the influence of other academic fields in the theory and practises of social marketing (Basil, 2019: 7). For this reason, academic research into social marketing is easily justifiable both from practical and theoretical perspectives. For further reading, Basil, Diaz-Meneses and Basil (2019) present a comprehensive collection of recent examples of social marketing campaigns concerning different topics from around the world, including health, education, environment and financial welfare.

2.1.2 From customer journey to marketing discourse

Marketing communications require a specific kind of discourse (Burcea, 2014: 607), and as such, understanding of language and communication. In Shaw's (2012: 12) words: "[Y]ou must make sure the overall message you're communicating is targeted, relevant, and inspiring." In marketing literature, various models have been developed to describe the customer's cognitive journey, which in turn guide the creation of discourse and other communicative resources.

One of the most traditional models depicting the customer journey is known as the AIDA model (Clemente, 2002; Young, 2011). The model describes the four cognitive steps involved in the consumer process from first contact with the product to purchase, but the model can also be useful in analysing the messaging of a social marketing campaign (Algie and Mead, 2019). The AIDA model

is based on a hierarchy of response (Young, 2011: 26), which makes it suitable for analysing social marketing that, as established earlier in the chapter, aims to provoke a behavioural response.

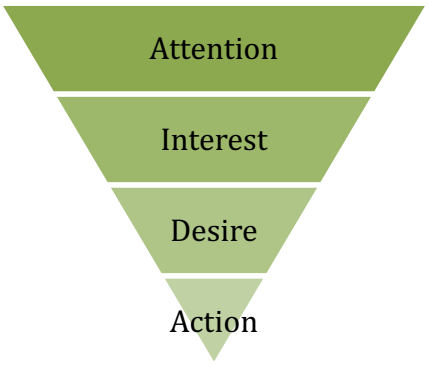

Figure 2.1: The AIDA model of marketing

The model, as presented above in Figure 2.1, starts with attention (A), and moves through interest (I) and desire (D) to the desired outcome, taking action (A). According to Young (2011: 26), the model assumes that attention creates interest, which then can be turned into desire through carefully crafted communication, which will then turn into action. It has been argued that not all phases are executed by marketing or communication efforts, but the theory rather describes the overall sales arch (Young 2011: 26). Despite the criticism, the model remains fairly applicable to the modern marketing experience, where even the action is often embedded into the digital context, e.g. via booking an appointment online, like in the context of the present study. More importantly, Young (2011: 28) makes a note the model's usefulness in planning communication goals. If the goals are defined in Shaw's (2012: 12) terms as being "targeted, relevant, and inspiring", a preliminary understanding of the cognitive processes of the desired audience can certainly provide useful insight for the marketer in charge of creating communications. According to Young (2011: 26) the underlying assumption is that a consumer goes through a linear process of cognitive functions in order to respond to a marketing message. This line of thinking is similar to some theories of argumentative discourse that will be covered in later chapters, which further emphasises the model's applicability to the present research. While perhaps overly simplified, the AIDA model is one of the most commonly known and taught models of marketing (Young, 2011: 26-27), which also makes it appropriate for the fairly superficial introduction to marketing literature that is required for the context of the present study.

In the following chapters, other relevant approaches to modern marketing will be introduced. Starting from how computers have changed the nature of communication through to digital marketing efforts

specifically in the website context, other characteristics that influence the nature of website discourse will be reviewed for a thorough understanding of the domain in which the present study takes place.

2.2 Computer-mediated change in communication

It's only been in the past about thirty years that computers have gone from special and technical to personal and popular (Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic, 2004). In other words, devices that were initially built for specific purposes, often industrial or technical, have since become an integral part of most humans' everyday life and interaction. Machines that once were slow, expensive and difficult to use have turned into handheld devices that have replaced a number of functions that used to be carried out by numerous complicated appliances, each once considered an innovation. Technological progress shows no signs of slowing down; instead, more and more of our daily functions and capabilities get built into apps while developers work hard to make the devices smaller, smarter and more self-sustaining.

Communication, in all of its forms, is a key component of being human, so it comes as no surprise that such a major change in our daily lives has facilitated a change in the way we interact with one another too. Communication via or aided by computers became a topic of interest for scholarly researchers in the mid-1980s (Herring, 1996: 2-3), and the field of research became known as computer-mediated communication, or CMC (Thurlow et al., 2004). It may be hard to pinpoint exactly where in the academic field CMC sits, as it is a phenomenon that can be looked at from viewpoints of technology, sociology, psychology or linguistics (Thurlow et al., 2004: 34) – just to name some examples. As a newer development in studies of communication, the interaction might not even be as simple as communication between humans. Depending on the research perspective, the focus of CMC can be on human-to-human communication, mass communication, media communication (Thurlow et al., 2004: 15) and now even communication between a human and a machine, like artificial intelligence (Yao and Ling, 2020: 7). It may be interaction from one to one, one to many, or many to many (Lee, 2020). The age of CMC continues to enable numerous new ways for communication to take place, constantly progress and mutate, and this makes it an endless and multidisciplinary field of research (Yao and Ling, 2020: 8).

A classic definition by Susan Herring (1996: 1), one of the first scholars in the field, simplifies computer-mediated communication as "communication that takes place between human beings via

the instrumentality of computers", thus covering anything from instant messaging to emails and Facebook statuses. Even though scholarly theories of CMC tend to emphasise the overall effect of digitalisation on human communication, in practice CMC is often more concerned with human interaction through and about the internet (Thurlow et al., 2004: 16). For the purposes of this study, the term "computer-mediated" is used to refer to all communication aided by an electronic device, be it desktop computers, tablets or mobile devices, to account for the increased use and adaptation of handheld mobile devices since the term has been established. Similar definitions have been presented by recent research in CMC; for instance, Yao and Ling (2020: 5) suggest a move from the term *computer-mediated* to the term *digitally-mediated.* Carr (2020) also proposes that CMC research should perhaps put less emphasis on defining computers and more focus on the mediated nature of the communication, regardless of the specific medium. The present research takes a similar stance on CMC: for the sake of the analysis, the definitive role of the computer- or digitally-mediated environment is in the nature of the communicative choices that it enables, not the specific devices.

Due to the ever-changing nature of the environment and the fact that most communication now is or can be digitally mediated, the focus of CMC research has since shifted from defining what it is to rather defining what *it is not* (Yao and Ling, 2020: 4). Although research has encompassed various forms of communication, many theories relate to human-to-human interaction and less focus has been devoted to theorising computer-mediated mass communication (Lee, 2020: 60). The data analysed in the present study can be considered media or mass communication, although with a clear, targeted audience in mind. According to Turnbull (2015: 291-292), communication from a brand or company towards individuals – although created by human employees of the company and clearly directed at other people – often takes the form of knowledge dissemination from an expect to a layman or a novice on the topic. This makes offering information in an understandable, relatable and cognitively accessible format one of the biggest challenges. Simultaneously, this is also what makes the communication argumentative in nature; the preliminary assumption before the communication takes place is that the receiver of the message needs more information, disagrees or needs to be convinced (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003: 5) and hence the discourse used in this type of context can often be looked at from an argumentative point of view. Chapter 3 will present the basics of argumentation research and its use in marketing communication in more detail.

Another key point of CMC for linguistic research is the vast amount of data easily available for analysis, including data that was previously inaccessible or has only been generated specifically for the CMC environment (Mann and Stewart, 2000). Herring (1996: 155-156) credited this as the biggest

advance in linguistic research since the tape recorder: it created a practically unlimited and ever-growing transcript of daily human interaction to analyse without concern about keeping record of spoken communication. This has enabled research on how language develops in the online environment (Crystal, 2001; McCulloch, 2019), how the online environment affects argumentative discourse (Degano, 2013) and how users retain information online (Mcintyre, Barnes and Ruel, 2016).

According to Mann and Stewart (2000a: 9), many see CMC "as a good way to test out ideas, form opinions, sharpen arguments and to say what they genuinely think in an informal or even anonymous setting", which has changed both the nature and characteristics of communication, and led to some theorists claiming that it created a whole new genre of unique, hybrid language (Mann and Stewart, 2000b: 181). Simultaneously, while images have always existed alongside written communication and hence multimodality has always been an integral part of human communication (Ventola, Charles and Kaltenbacher, 2004; Kress, 2010), the adaptation of digital devices into our daily lives has played an important role in the increased interest in studying multimodality (Kress, 2010: 6). Bateman, Wildfeuer and Hiippala (2017: 347) name websites as one of the most obvious manifestations of multimodal communication. While face-to-face interaction can be influenced by modes like facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures (Kress, 2010) , many of the features that make communication human are erased in computer-aided communication (Liebman and Gergle, 2016: 570), simultaneously changing the nature of how the message can be interpreted. Instead, similar communicative goals can now be accomplished with "CMC cues" such as punctuation or the use of emojis (Liebman and Gergle, 2016: 570). As the point that is of particular importance for the present study, the same message that used to be communicated with words in face-to-face interaction might now be facilitated by an image or perhaps a combination of an image and text. Online communication relies more heavily on photos, designs and moving images over text, creating a need for a new approach to analysing discourse. To facilitate analysis of this type of data, the study of multimodality views all elements (or 'modes') as important contributors to delivering a message (Forceville and Tseronis, 2017; Tseronis, 2018). The development of the CMC space together with the advances in multimodality has also led to a change in the human processing of data. According to Kress (2010: 81), the rules of spatial sequencing that speech and text display – and that make them linear in nature – do not apply to 'reading' an image (and by extension, a combination of images and text, such as a website). Instead of consuming the content in the intended order, the user is left to determine the sequencing themselves (Kress, 2010: 81). This has changed the nature of how information is designed and processed, which in turn is important knowledge for anyone designing influential marketing

discourse online. These particular features of website discourse will be revisited in Chapter 2.3 while discussing the specific features of website discourse, and in Chapter 3 in a discussion about multimodal argumentation in the website context.

To summarise, computer-mediated communication as a field has emerged to give researches tools and models to apply while navigating this ever-adapting space. It has permanently changed the nature of communication and created new types of data to analyse. In the present study, the CMC space is primarily considered a space and medium for delivering a message, and most notably influences the analysis through the way it enables different modes of communication and changes in content consumption. These characteristics will be further explored in the following chapters.

2.3 Digital marketing today – what's the role of the website?

This chapter provides an overview of the current state of digital marketing, first presenting the larger context and how the CMC change has changed the nature of marketing. In the second subchapter, emphasis is put on website communication in particular. After this chapter, the foundation for digital marketing discourse as much as it is relevant for the present analysis will have been laid out.

2.3.1 Basics of digital marketing today

As more and more of human interaction became computer-mediated, it was only a matter of time before the marketing world moved into the digital sphere as well. Wind and Mahajan (2004: vi) characterise the rise of digital marketing as not only a new tool, "not just regular marketing on steroids", but as a complete game changer, something that required marketers to quickly rethink their ways. The average consumer suddenly gained easy and fast access to all the information in the world, which resulted in an unforeseen powershift in the rules of traditional marketing (Wind and Mahajan, 2004: 3). "Empowered by technology, customers are unforgiving. Pity the poor company that fails to see this or refuses to play by the new rules", Wind and Mahajan (2004: 3) wrote in the beginning of the millennium, and rightfully so – in 2020, companies that don't exist online hardly exist. Today, over 3 billion people regularly use online services (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019: 5), social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook allow hundreds of millions of people to connect in a matter of seconds (Hofacker, 2018: 3), and Google earns more advertising revenue than any other Fortune 500 company (Hofacker, 2018: 3).

In modern-day marketing, it is common for initiatives to span across a number of platforms and media, both online and offline (Batra and Keller, 2016: 122). The focus of the present study is on the online space and communication that is characteristic to that environment. Therefore, the contextual background presented in this chapter focusses on the digital side of marketing, first briefly introducing some key functions of digital marketing and finally focussing on the role of websites in the bigger picture.

Firstly, the use of the term "digital marketing" in the present study should be clarified. Despite a common overlap of the terms "digital marketing" and "online marketing", digital marketing does not only mean marketing on the World Wide Web; it also includes anything from outdoor marketing on digital displays to ads in apps on mobile devices (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019: 5-6). To put it in generic terms, Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019: 9) define digital marketing as "achieving marketing objectives through applying digital media, data and technology". In this sense, the term ties back to the definition of computer-mediated communication in Chapter 2.2. Although the main focus of the current study is on web-mediated content, digital marketing can be defined as any marketing communication activity mediated or aided by a digital device: functionally, computer-mediated marketing.

Hofacker (2016) breaks down the purpose of digital marketing into three distinctive domains with unique goals: a communications medium, a distribution channel, and a connection service. For communicative purposes, online media function similarly to traditional mass media, only with distinctively more interactive communication models (Hofacker, 2016: 47), allowing the user a more active role than before with the implementation of hypertextual elements (Eckkrammer, 2004; Bolaños Medina et al., 2008) The internet as a mass media channel is distinctively more user-driven; if the message is not right, the user is able to abandon the content in one simple click (Hofacker, 2016: 49). Through the vast multimodality of content, the user also controls the order and amount of information they choose to consume (cf. Kress, 2010). As a distribution channel, the function of the media is to provide solutions to the user's problems, often through selling (Hofacker, 2016: 107). As a connective service, the purpose is to connect users with similar interests or goals (Hofacker, 2016: 153). The data analysed in the present study primarily serves the two former functions, which are more typical to one-to-many, i.e. mass media communications (Hofacker, 2016). Due to the commercial or otherwise argumentative element typically present in this type of communication, Foggs (2008: 23) calls it "mass interpersonal persuasion", underlining the fact that marketing

communications, at their core, aim to influence opinions or behaviour. The following chapter takes a more detailed look at the features and goals of website communication in particular.

2.3.2 Websites as a medium for marketing communication

Communicative goals of the website

Websites were among the first computer-mediated fields of communication, long before social media started taking over the scene. In the early 1990s, simple-form websites started appearing, becoming more dynamic and advanced in the late 90s with the developments in web design and the launch of blogs and online news sites (Virtanen, Stein and Herring, 2013: 12). With the launch of Content Management Systems (CMS) in the early 2000s, websites became more standardised and subject to more structured research (Bolaños Medina et al., 2008: 78). The early 2000s also saw the rise of the first social media sites, such as MySpace, and towards the end of the 00s, a large majority of internet users were registered on Facebook. Despite the 2010s undeniably being the era of social media, websites are still a key part of any company's online marketing strategy, as illustrated by the topic's dominant presence in recent marketing literature (Batra and Keller, 2016; Hofacker, 2018; Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Websites serve a different communicative purpose than most social media channels, which could be one of the main reasons explaining their popularity, despite the popularity of other media. In research literature, websites are typically considered part of *Web 1.0*, a space that was and still is primarily driven by information and utility, such as publishing, websites, or directories (Virtanen et al., 2013: 13). In some ways, it functions almost as an encyclopaedia of information and tools to facilitate knowledge sharing and processes, with content contributions primarily from the site admins, like business employees. In contrast, content in *Web 2.0* is primarily driven and created by users, including wikis, blogs and social media (Virtanen et al., 2013: 12). In light of this, website communication is closer to mass communication or expert communication in nature, whereas social media and other parts of Web 2.0 are primarily dominated by peer-to-peer communication, interaction and communities.

The purpose of a website is often two-fold: primarily to provide first-hand information, and secondarily to convince or persuade (Bolaños Medina et al., 2008: 75). Earlier research shows that websites, particularly in a social marketing context, are viewed as credible sources of information

(Cugelman, Thelwall and Daves, 2008: 49). The persuasive aspect might be anything from trying to make a sale to changing behaviour or understanding or a specific topic. To this end, Sharp (2001) argues that in order to be successful in its core communicative purpose, every website should have one specific and relatively narrow goal that she calls the "positive response action". This is particularly true in the case of a marketing website, where the primary goal is often direct action from the user. From the perspective of communication studies, the process can be simplified as the receiver (website user) decoding the sender's (website creator) message. Within this view, Sharp (2001: 14) notes that each user views a message through their own lense, and hence it is the sender's responsibility to make decoding (i.e. correctly understanding) the message as simple as possible for the receiver, further emphasising the role of those who plan marketing communications on the internet.

Multimodal and hypertextual features of the website

The internet is the largest *hypermedia*, which means it consists of typographic and non-typographic elements such as text, images and hyperlinks, which in turn form entities like websites (Djonov, Knox and Zhao, 2015: 315). As such, websites are among "the most obvious manifestations of the growth of multimodal communication" (Bateman et al., 2017: 347). While the biggest advantages of social media include its conversational nature, a website as a space is far more adaptable in terms of design, content and functionality (Berkebile, 2018). Hence, Bateman et al. (2017: 347) claim that whilst there have been many efforts to conceptualise multimodal website analysis, the specific features of a website are hard to define, and at best, the term offers "a moving target" and "an abbreviation for a range of different media". Cugelman et al. (2008) find that the website format also enables the implementation of technologically persuasive strategies, such as phasing the persuasive process throughout the site in order to make the final action seem less daunting. For this reason, Bolaños Medina et al (2008: 76) argue that despite similar features, websites cannot be considered mass communication as such, because technology and hypertextuality allow the content to be adapted for the specific user and through that, give the user an "unprecedented range of action". Similarly to the key communicative goals presented in the previous subchapter, Hofacker (2016: 66) summarises that one of the key goals of web interface design is "matching site characteristics to the benefits sought by the visitors to the site", a question marketers also seek to answer through audience segmentation and analysis (e.g. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Considering the similar communicative goals, studies of computer-mediated argumentation often overlap with studies of persuasive technology or design (cf. Oinas-Kukkonen et al., 2008). Website content is also commonly researched from

perspectives of genre studies (Bolaños Medina et al., 2008; Degano, 2013) or data-driven content analysis (Brejla and Gilbert, 2014). In fact, according to Kok (2004: 157), "the functions of hypertext are not wholly determined by either by technology or society, but by technology used in society." For this reason, multimodal discourse analysis provides a sufficiently complex perspective to analysing the resources used in website communication. This type of approach has recently been utilised by Krisjanous (2016) in her analysis of multimodal discourse in dark tourism websites, and Djonov, Knox and Zhao (2015) in an educational website context. The approaches of multimodality that are relevant to the present study will be further explored in Chapters 3 and 4.

It has been established that one of the key differences of CMC compared to traditional discourse is its hypertextual potential. Hypertext, by nature, enables multimodality, non-linear structures and overlapping of semantic modes (Eckkrammer, 2004: 215). The effect of nonlinearity in the consumption and recall of online content has been studied by researchers including Eveland and Cortese (2004), Degano (2013), and Mcintyre, Barnes and Ruel (2016). Within the scope of this type of research, it has been shown that the linearity of content has an effect on the way information on the site is consumed and retained. For example, Mcintyre et al (2016) studied the impact of website structure on the user's attention, attitude and comprehension of site content. The researchers compared two website types, dubbed "scroll-down" and "click-through", where the key difference in site type is the linearity of content and the website experience. They found the linear outline of the site plays a role in the way users retain and respond to the site content. Additionally, as enabled by persuasive technology, user agency – or "range of action" as it was referred to earlier (Bolaños Medina et al., 2008: 76) – enables the information system to adapt site content and structure according to the activity of the user (Bolaños Medina et al., 2008: 76), for instance through hyperlinks and menus. In Eckkrammer's (2004: 15) words, hypertextuality "permits the reader to choose and create an individual path to construct a continuity of meaning" and "may dissolve the clear-cut line between the text producer and the reader by fostering interactive processes". In practice, it can be viewed that the meaning and structure of hypertextual output is determined pragmatically – through the process of consuming it – rather than grammatically or functionally (Miles, 2000).

For the present study, these characteristics of hypertextuality and multimodality of the website are reflected particularly in the view of how the user (the term 'user' is used to refer to a person viewing or consuming the content of a website) interacts with the elements of the site and whether the content has been created to be consumed in a linear order. The concept of website nonlinearity is somewhat

contradictory to traditional models of argumentative discourse, which will be further addressed in the following chapters.

3 Multimodal argumentation

Chapter 2 introduced the basics of marketing and computer-mediated communication as the contextual background of the study. In reviewing the fundamentals, different levels of linearity and multimodality were identified as defining characteristics of marketing communication in the CMC space. The role of argumentative discourse was also briefly touched upon while discussing marketing communications. This chapter dives deeper into theories of multimodality and argumentation.

First, tools and theories of analysing argumentative discourse are explored. Secondly, key concepts of multimodality are introduced. The final chapters will meet at the intersection of the two to distinguish a multimodal argumentation theory and its applications to analysing marketing communications as the key theoretical framework for the present study.

3.1 The study of argumentation

In everyday language, arguments are generally understood to be negative instances of disagreement, usually causing friction between the participants. In research, an argument is, at its simplest, seen as a claim backed by reasoning. It is also commonly viewed as both the act of arguing as well as the by-product of the act (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003: 1).

To narrow down the definition of argument in the present study, the starting point is Groerke's (2015: 134-135) definition, which states that arguments are "standpoints (conclusions) backed by reasons (premises)". Although they are often used to settle a disagreement (i.e. "an argument"), Groarke (ibid.) stresses that arguments can also be used as tools to avoid disagreement before it happens. Similarly to van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2003) definition above, Groarke defines argumentation as not only the arguments themselves but also the context and conversation surrounding them (2015: 135), which enables expanding the concept to a wider understanding of argumentation and simultaneously allows the possibility including methods of multimodality into analysing the discourse. The implementation of multiple modes into the theory of argumentation is a fairly recent conversation (Groarke, 2015; Tseronis and Forceville, 2017), which will be further discussed in later chapters.

While argumentation has become an interdisciplinary topic of interest, it is by no means a field that unites all researchers in agreement. There are nearly as many argumentation theories as there are theorists. Argumentation as a field of research has existed for centuries and most concepts and theories examine written or spoken (i.e. verbal) language and its characteristics as the basis for argumentation (Tseronis, 2018: 42). According to van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2003: 2), argumentation theorists are interested in "the oral and written production of argumentation and the analysis and the evaluation of argumentative discourse". Among many other relevant perspectives, argumentative analysis may be conducted based on models stemming from social sciences or communication theory (e.g. Willard, 1989), linguistic reviews of the use of figurative language (Sopory and Dillard, 2002; Forceville, 2010), as well as comprehensive and complex pragma-dialectical theories (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003; van Eemeren, 2013), which will lay the foundation for the present research.

The study of argumentation proves useful in fields where argumentative rhetoric is used for influence, for example in law and politics (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003; van Eemeren, 2010) or marketing discourse (Degano, 2013). Willard (1989) views argumentation as a skill to be learned rather than an inherent quality, which enables an ongoing need for research not only to provide tools for those who argue, but also as media literacy skills for those being influenced by the discourse. For this reason, familiarity with theories and tools of argumentation is useful for those who work in advertising and marketing or are exposed to it, which – as has been shown in Chapter 2 – means practically everyone. Argumentative discourse usually aims to persuade, influence or otherwise "convince the reader" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003: 2), but particularly when discussing argumentation in a marketing context, it is important to note that not all influence and persuasion happens through arguments (Blair, 1996: 23). Similarly, not all discourse is inherently argumentative; it only becomes such when a specific context enables it (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003: 3).

The pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation, created by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2003) is one of the most influential theories in the field of argumentation studies (Pajunen, 2015). The theory stems from a semiotic research perspective and aims to create a systematic model for analysing argumentative discourse or, as it is called in the theory, 'critical discussion' (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003). In the eyes of the pragma-dialectical school, "argumentation is an attempt to overcome doubt regarding the acceptability of a standpoint" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003: 53). The theory emphasises the view that due to the dialectical and societal nature of argumentative discourse, discourse is influenced by its context, and as such, language plays a functional role

alongside other elements, such as argumentative structure and design (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003: 53). In this sense, it stresses the importance of the social reality in which it occurs in analysing argumentative discourse (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003: 8). In simple terms, the pragma-dialectical theory views argumentation as social, rational and verbal (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003: 2). While this builds an inevitable connection between argumentative theory and discourse analysis, it also means that in traditional pragma-dialectical discourse, arguments and their implications have primarily been viewed as verbal utterances, or 'speech acts' (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003: 54). Multimodal argumentation theorists have since proposed its equal value in enabling analysis of the non-verbal elements of communication; these will be further discussed in Chapter 3.2.

At the core of the pragma-dialectical theory, the argumentative process is broken into four stages. The stages, as presented by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2003), are:

1) The confrontation stage,
2) The opening stage,
3) The argumentation stage, and
4) The concluding stage.

Although some stages of the argument may be implicit and others more dominant in the discourse, this breakdown provides a framework for understanding the different phases of argumentative discourse. The theory suggests that there is a logical continuity to the process of argumentation, from establishing the difference in opinion through to presenting the claims, justifying them and finally agreeing on an end result for the discussion (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003: 57-58). In contrast to many other logical structures of argumentation, the pragma-dialectical model emphasises the discursive nature of each speech act in resolving the argument and therefore, instead of simply analysing conclusions, aims to provide a theoretical framework against which these elements can be further explored via the means of discourse analysis or other relevant methodologies (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003: 58-59). As mentioned, the theory has been influential in the field of argumentative research, and the model utilised in the present study is also based on van Eemeren and Grootendorst's work.

Although the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentative discourse provides a useful framework for analysis, it is worth noting that the approach primarily views the act of argumentation as a dialogue,

a discussion with at least two active participants. However, in mass communication, such as politics or marketing communications, the discourse often takes the form of knowledge dissemination from an "expert" source to an inactive listener (Turnbull, 2015: 291-292). With this in mind, the discourse must be built with sound reasoning and argumentative rhetoric to appeal to the intended audience (van Eemeren, 2010: 1). Next to changing opinions or avoiding disagreements, argumentation can be utilised to encourage action (van Eemeren, 2010: 1-3), like in the present study. To this end, van Eemeren (2010: 3) makes a distinction between *discussion* (a dialogue) and *quasi-discussion* (a monologue aimed at changing the listener's opinions). Despite the interactive elements of digital media, such as hypertextuality as discussed in the previous chapters, marketing communications still often resemble "quasi-discussions" more than two-sided critical conversations. In the case of a website, the stage of confrontation is often implied, and the discourse consists of one party (the website) assuming the second party (the user) is open to hearing the arguments without the ability to present clear counterarguments. This is particularly relevant when assessing the argumentative impact of a marketing campaign; the results and particularly the reasons for them are often hard to evaluate. Chapter 3.3 covers the applications of argumentation theory in a marketing context in more detail.

As the focus of the present study comes from studies of linguistics and communication, and as the aim is to explore the elements that contribute to the entity of the argument, the pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation provides a defined framework against which more microlevel analysis can be reflected. The specific applications of the theory will be presented in later chapters, but first the following chapters will delve deeper into multimodality and marketing in relation to argumentation theory.

3.2 Multimodality in argumentation

3.2.1 Defining multimodality

Understanding the semiotic principle that "similar understandings can be developed for systems of communication other than language" (Burn and Parker, 2003: 1) is the first step to defining the concept of multimodality. The theory of multimodality is based on an equal appreciation and understanding of all semiotic systems, not only written communication. In practice, this could mean anything from symbols to sounds as modes of communication (cf. Ventola et al., 2004; Kress, 2010). While the concept of multimodality does not undermine the importance of verbal language, it

underlines the view that similar meanings can be created and communicated through means other than written or spoken language, and most importantly, in interaction of these different systems (Stöckl, 2004; Tseronis and Forceville, 2017; Tseronis, 2018).

> *"*The point of [multimodality] is, precisely, to explore the different potentials for providing means of expressing views, positions, attitudes, facts; and to enable the production of what is best suited to a specific task or need. A visual 'statement' — the world shown — 'captures' different aspects of the world 'in the frame' to a verbal one, which gives insights into the world told. As modes, image and writing offer different lenses, provide different perspectives*."* (Kress, 2014: 62)

Researchers in semiotics and multimodality support this statement by characterising language as transactional and dynamic (Thurlow et al., 2004: 18) and hence inherently multimodal. Kress (2000: 337) even claims that it is simply impossible to interpret texts without understanding all the other modes involved in communicating meaning. Stöckl (2004: 9) makes a similar point by saying that understanding multimodality is crucial to understanding communication.

While it can be argued that one research perspective alone is not enough to create a comprehensive view of multimodal communication, linguists have been interested in creating systematic semiotic models around multimodality since the 1990s, most notably derived from the work of Halliday and Matthiessen (1999), the same school that has inspired many theories of discourse analysis (Mäntynen and Pietikäinen, 2009). The existence of multimodality implies an existence of modes that contribute to it, and for example Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) have theorised applications of Halliday's work to include multiple modes. There is still a general consensus among linguists that all other semiotic models are built upon and interpreted based on the concept of language (Muntigl, 2004: 32). Meanwhile, some multimodal theorists believe that other modes do not simply follow the rules of language, and hence they have aimed to create new models to account for non-verbal modes of communication (Ventola et al., 2004: 2).

When talking about multimodality, there is often a divide between the verbal and the visual. In contrast to verbal communication, visual communication is mediated without words or language in its literal sense (Blair, 1996: 25). Traditionally, visual communication and written communication have been studied as separate fields, but as Tseronis and Forceville (2017: 2) point out, this fails to consider the interaction of these elements in building meaning. It has been argued that in some instances, modern communication actually relies more heavily on visuals than textual elements, even where text would have traditionally been used to convey the meaning (Kress, 2004: 112). This point

is particularly notable when considering communication in a computer-mediated context, like websites or social media networks that often prioritise visual content over large amounts of text. It has also been suggested that the dominance of the visual over the verbal rings particularly true in advertising (Peréz-Sobrino, 2016: 9).

The first step to understanding the definition of multimodality in the present study is narrowing down what is meant by 'mode', a task that that divides the field. Differences in the interpretation of the concept of mode are common in the study of multimodality, with some researchers preferring more clear-cut categorisations than others (cf. Bateman et al., 2017). Often, in a struggle to define a specific mode, the makings of multimodality are defined based on their characteristics, without regard for their interplay (Bateman et al., 2017: 16-17). For this reason, the understanding of a mode in the present study relies on the following three factors based on Stöckl (2004: 11):

1. A mode cannot strictly be defined by its path of perception; the same mode can often be interpreted through visual and textual means (for example, in the case of written text),
2. A single mode can be interpreted or presented through a number of media (e.g. written text can be read out loud or presented in video, audio, etc., blurring the line between media),
3. Modes often overlap and form sub-modes within and across themselves.

By definition, this view on multimodality underlines the nature of modes as distinctive elements with individual features, but places emphasis on their interaction in creating representation and meaning. While this definition makes it more difficult to clearly differentiate between the specific, individual 'modes', it allows looking at media as a combination of interactive factors rather than a construction of separate building blocks. It also underlines the interactive, at times less than linear, nature of computer-mediated marketing communication and argumentation. The interaction of multiple modes is so embedded into most modern media that an average reader hardly even registers the variation or variety of modes in the content they are consuming (Stöckl, 2004: 16). In fact, despite the field only gaining academic ground fairly recently, multimodal information is and has always played a fundamental role in our daily interactions (Bateman et al., 2017: 7).

For now, it could be summarised that according to most current multimodal theories, understanding language and its rules on some level is necessary to understand and analyse multimodality, and

understanding multimodality is necessary to understand (contemporary) communication. As has been shown in earlier chapters and will continue to demonstrated in the ones that follow, the nature and definition of multimodality depends greatly on the context in which the term is used, and the definition chosen for the present study might not be the definition chosen by someone else doing similar research. The specific reasoning and implications for the chosen theory will be further detailed in Chapter 5. In the next chapters, multimodality's role in argumentation and marketing theory will be further presented.

3.2.2 Multimodal argumentation

If a picture is worth a thousand words, why has it taken researchers so long to consider the possibility that visual elements can be intentionally and functionally used as arguments? Much like theories of communication in general, most argumentation theories are built exclusively around verbal rhetoric, and visual argumentation has been a debated topic since it was first introduced in research in the 1990s.

The study of multimodal argumentation is a fairly new field, and until recently, verbal and visual communication used to be considered separate fields. In *Multimodal Argumentation and Rhetoric in Media Genres* (Tseronis and Forceville, 2017), Blair (2017: ix) wonders if the release of the book is the beginning of a whole new multidisciplinary field of research, given the variety of fields, theories and perspectives in the articles gathered for the book. The study of multimodality often meets at the crossroads of a number of research fields, with each researcher selecting relevant theories from their respective academic backgrounds, be it psychology, history or art (Bateman et al., 2017: 23). In multimodal argumentation specifically, early theories have been developed from the viewpoints of communication, linguistics and rhetoric (Tseronis and Forceville, 2017: 2), to name a few. The multidisciplinary nature and fairly new status of this specific field makes it an exciting playground for new research and perspectives. By extension, it also values the complexity of the online environment by acknowledging that one research perspective might simply not be enough (Bateman et al., 2017: 73), much like only one "correct" interpretation of multimodal output, or communication in general, is rarely possible (cf. Kress, 2010).

Fairly recently, Tseronis (2018) criticised most argumentation theorists about emphasising the role of context and interaction in multimodal argumentation theory but forgetting to implement it in practise; to date, most research looks at visual elements and verbal elements separately. Similar to

the point made in the previous chapter, he also elaborates that visual argumentation is traditionally theorised and interpreted through text or otherwise verbal means, rendering the term "visual argument" somewhat irrelevant or inefficient (Tseronis, 2018). In his mind, verbal and visual elements as two separate modes work together to create one argument, not separate arguments for each mode. In his theory, Tseronis (2018: 47) stresses the importance of form over content in analysing multimodal argumentative output. In practice, this means considering all visual elements from picture framing to position on the screen with equal level of care as style, wording and similar functions have traditionally been in verbal output. Similar critique has been put forward by researchers in the past, but it has taken until the 2000s for real advancements to be made in the field.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, advertising and marketing as a field is often a point of interest for researchers of multimodality and argumentation. However, it has been suggested that particularly in a marketing or advertising context, images themselves cannot form arguments; they can only influence or persuade (Kjeldsen, 2015: 118). To understand the criticism, the definitions of persuasion and argumentation need to be clarified. While the definitions vary and some scholars prefer to make a clear difference between the concepts of persuasion and argumentation and others view them as somewhat parallel, in van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2003: 2) view, the key defining factors of an argument are its rational and verbal nature, insinuating that images are neither verbal nor rational. At the other end of the spectrum, Shelley (1996: 53) defines "ease of comprehension" and "emotional impact" as the very defining characteristic of visual arguments. According to Blair (1995: 26), "for something to count as an argument, we have to be able to say what the claim is and what the reasons are, and we have to be able to say so clearly enough that the claims or reasons can be accepted or rejected."

Hence, based on some of these definitions, it could be stipulated that images alone, without their verbal companions, are not able to communicate logical, rational discourse and hence, are not arguments in the term's traditional sense. By applying the theories of multimodality and argumentation presented in the earlier chapters, it is however possible to create a framework that both appreciates the traditional structure of argumentative discourse but also allows non-verbal modes as equal contributors to the argumentative rhetoric. In respect to traditional views of argumentation, images alone might not be considered arguments as such, but their value in supporting multimodal argumentation cannot be denied. While visuals are more often used in the persuasive sense, in reality, the two often overlap, with emotional persuasive methods applied alongside factual arguments. Based on Tseronis' (2018) view of multimodality and the earlier definition of mode by Stöckl (2004),

making a clear distinction between the exact argumentative (or "unargumentative") value of each mode should be impossible. In the present study, the structured process of argumentation is used as a framework for reviewing the multimodal elements – including images and other visual elements – that contribute to the argument of the campaign. To reiterate Blair (1996: 26), the argument is an argument when the claims and its reasons are made clear enough to be accepted or rejected.

3.3 Multimodality and argumentation in marketing

Previous chapters have shown that marketing and advertising as a field is a prime candidate for both multimodal and argumentative research, due to its influential and visual nature. This chapter presents an overview of how these fields of research can contribute to marketing communications, as well as some of the earlier research in the field. Finally, the structural framework for categorising the argumentative discourse in the present study will be presented.

The field of advertising and marketing is to date one of the most commonly researched multimodal environments due to its inherently argumentative nature (Kjeldsen, 2015): there is a clear purpose and message to be conveyed through the multimodal elements. Research is often conducted from the perspective of marketing theory, but in line with discussion in the previous chapters, White (2012) proposes a different perspective by opening a conversation around a discourse-driven model of multimodality in marketing. Quoting Scollion's work (1998: 12, as cited in White, 2012: 311), he emphasises focus on multimodal elements "in use, not just present in the environment". On the level of discourse, Thurlow et al. (2004: 92) also note that it is "all about context and function, not simply form and content." In a similar vein, White (2012) emphasises a user's interaction with a visual marketing element as a process rather than a brief moment: a discourse between the ad and the user (or even a "discussion", to use van Eemeren's (2010) terms). White's (2012) theory relates specifically to billboard or poster ads, but it easily extends to digital marketing elements by focussing on the entire process of interaction with the ad rather than only the first instance that caught the user's attention. This could then be seen as a contribution to the discursive element of the argumentative structure, as presented in the previous chapter. Emphasising the importance of context and function generally follows along the same lines as theories of multimodality, hypertext and pragma-dialectics, which emphasise the environment and interaction of elements as key in interpreting discourse.

From the perspective of argumentation, Degano (2013) claims that the multimodality of the internet has changed the way argumentation is interpreted online. Due to the loss of linearity in the processing of visual and textual data online, it is no longer a given that a user consumes information in the order the author intended, making it a new necessity to "build, in place of a single argument, a structure of possibilities" (Bolter, 1991: 119, cited in Degano, 2013: 101. Echoing what was discussed in earlier chapters about website communication, Kress (2004: 116) calls this "design as choice": making constant and conscious choices about the modes to implement and enable in visual and textual design to best convey the intended message. In hypertext, such as websites, this means careful consideration for content and user interface design when it comes to the placement of elements on the website (cf. Carter, 2003) to enable initiating 'a discussion' (van Eemeren, 2010) instead of 'a moment' (White, 2012).

While it has been proposed that the sheer volume of elements in the web environment (cf. Degano 2013: 120) has the potential to make the experience overwhelming for the user, at the same time it is worth noting that with the advancements in technology in the past couple of decades, our brains are now more adept at processing multimodal information and might actually prefer it that way (Lorenz-Spreen, Mønsted, Hövel et al., 2019). Turnbull (2015: 297) suggests that while argumentation in hypertext has its challenges, it might actually facilitate knowledge dissemination by breaking down information into smaller, more digestible chunks. Degano (2013: 102) also argues that the erratic nature of online argumentation might actually be structurally closer to real-life argumentation than traditional models are: everyday human interaction rarely follows a strictly laid out pattern, but it may instead jump back and forth between elements. To this end, Degano (2013: 102) proposes that the pragma-dialectical model of 'deconstructing' an argument into four cohesive but individually functional units – opening, confrontation, argumentation and conclusion, as presented in the previous chapter – can be utilised to support the theory of nonlinearity in online argumentation. The theory emphasises the view that an argument is constructed of these pieces and in order to understand the function of the argument, they need to be looked at as unique units ('modes' of argumentation, so to say) that might appear in a different order than a logical, linear one. The view that the language of CMC communication, even in written form, might in fact be closer to verbal communication in nature has also been suggested by Herring (1996: 3).

In studies of multimodal structures in advertising, the data being analysed is commonly page-based, standalone advertisements (see Forceville, 2010; White, 2012; Peréz-Sobrino, 2016; Rocci et al., 2018). The findings of these studies can be useful in analysing advertising discourse on the web,

which will be further discussed in following chapters. Before proceeding to methods of analysis on the microlevel, the key framework for macrolevel organisation and analysis in the present study will be presented.

In an application of van Eemeren and Grootendorst's breakdown presented in Chapter 3.1, Delgano (2013: 105) created a framework of core moves in the analysis of a campaign website. In her study, she split the campaign website of two NGOs' marketing campaigns into three core moves:

1) Stating the campaign's aim,
2) Making the case for support, and
3) Call for action.

She additionally presented four 'optional moves': setting premises, establishing legitimacy, contesting an opponent's legitimacy and pre-empting possible objections (Degano, 2013: 105). While her study focuses more on genre and cohesion rather than the multimodality of the arguments, her categorisation provides a useful framework for further studies of website argumentation and campaigning. Combining Degano's categorisation of the argumentative elements with the studies of multimodal tropes in advertising – which will be discussed in Chapter 4 – creates an insightful framework for assessing the multimodal and metaphorical argumentative discourse in campaign websites that are built of notably more elements than single-page posters or social media graphics. In the present study, an adaptation of Degano's framework is used to frame the structure of a multimodal argument on the web. The structure will be revisited in further detail in Chapter 5.

4 Analysing multimodality

The argumentation theories presented in the previous chapter provide a larger framework for analysis in the present study. On the microlevel, discourse-driven models of analysis provide tools for characterising the individual elements that build the entity. This chapter first presents the concept of multimodal metaphor, which builds the backbone of the campaign narrative in question. Secondly, methods of multimodal discourse analysis are presented. By the end of this chapter, the full theoretical background for the present study will have been presented.

4.1 Multimodal metaphors

Much like written communication, multimodal content utilises a variety of tools and tropes to deliver a message. Examples that are most commonly referred to in research literature are metonymies and metaphors (Forceville, 2010; Downing and Mujic, 2013; Pérez-Sobrino, 2016; Rocci et al., 2018). When multimodal communication is viewed as equal to language, it is simple to justify the use of similar tropes. While this view suggests that many visual tropes might have to be interpreted through their verbal counterparts and hence traditional understanding of language, many cognitive linguists studying multimodal tropes argue that metaphors are in fact conceptual rather than verbal in nature (Yu, 2009: 137). The following paragraph on metaphors will examine the difference.

The discourse examined in the present study is multimodally built upon a metaphor, so introducing the concept is necessary for thorough understanding of the data and analysis. According to Kövecses and Benczes (2010: ix), a metaphor is "a figure of speech in which one thing is compared with another by saying that one is the other". Much like tropes in general, metaphors have traditionally been viewed to serve a linguistic and, in some way, artistic or rhetoric function – not one that is required for communicative reasons (Kövecses and Benczes, 2010: xi-x). However, more recent research distinguishes between the conceptual and linguistic nature of a metaphor. Kövecses and Benczes (2010: 4) illustrate that in practice, a conceptual metaphor is commonly one that does not exist in linguistic use, but functions as the foundation for many linguistic metaphorical expressions. To use an example within the domain of the present study, metaphorical expressions like "Oh, I see" and "In view of this…", along with many others in daily idiomatic use, are cognitively built upon the conceptual metaphor that "seeing is understanding". Hence, while often expressed through the means of language (Forceville, 2009: 21), the metaphor can be viewed as primarily a cognitive rather than

verbal phenomenon in nature (Koller, 2009: 46). In direct relevance to the stance of the present research, Kövecses and Benczes (2010: 63) emphasise the notion that since metaphors are first and foremost conceptual, they must manifest in ways other than simply verbal. This, in turn, builds an inevitable bridge between the studies of multimodality and metaphors. In multimodal communication, building upon the conceptual framework of metaphorical narrative creates a versatile toolset for influential discourse through tropes that might not be possible or accepted solely through the means of verbal language. Hence, for the purposes of the present analysis, the term 'metaphor' is used in a broader sense of the word, including both verbal and conceptual metaphors and, where relevant, metonyms as manifestations of metaphorical thinking (cf. Yu, 2009: 120).

In the past couple of decades, research focused on multimodal tropes has been distinguished as a separate branch of cognitive linguistics. In his paper, Forceville (2010) stresses the importance of studying multimodal tropes for the study of metaphor in general, for its contribution to multimodal discourse studies as well as for the research's contribution to the work of creative designers or other professionals in charge of producing multimodal discourse for a variety of purposes. Advertising represents one of the major domains in which metaphors thrive, and the multimodal conceptualisation of a metaphor has the power to make or break an ad (Kövecses and Benczes, 2010: 65). By extension, contributions to the study of multimodal tropes can provide insightful guidelines for anyone in the marketing communications field by strengthening the understanding of how multimodal information is created, processed and interpreted. For these reasons reasons, much of the recent research corpus in the field also relates to marketing communications.

Stemming from theories of multimodality and linguistics, Peréz-Sobrino (2016) studied the multimodal elements across 21 advertising campaigns utilising multimodal tropes as the backbone of the campaign. The research found that while the majority of the figurative value of the campaign was built on visual rather than verbal elements, it is the combination – a multimodal trope – that is the most powerful way of supporting the campaign cause (Peréz-Sobrino, 2016: 8-9). Similarly, Rocci et al. (2018) argue that multimodally presented metaphors and metonyms can play a crucial role in supporting messages implied by multimodal text. In earlier research, Koller (2009) has shown that many brands use conceptual metaphors to build "brand personalities" and Yu (2009) explored the multimodal manifestations of metaphors in Chinese TV adverts, each showcasing the role and power of the multimodal metaphor in marketing discourse. The present study will build on top of the existing research by examining the role of the multimodal metaphor in relation to the argumentative structure and multimodal discourse.

In talking about metaphors, it is common to refer to *domains*, usually specified as source and target (Kövecses and Benczes, 2010: 4). Simply put, "the target domain is the domain that we try to understand through the use of the source domain" (Kövecses and Benczes, 2010: 4). In cognitive linguistics, understanding a metaphor is then defined as understanding the inferences made between the two domains (Forceville, 2009; Kövecses and Benczes, 2010). In more practical terms, Phillips and McQuarrie (2004: 119) exemplify that in a marketing context, "an ad suggests that two images are the same in some way --- and invites the consumer to compare the two images to generate one or more inferences regarding other similarities between them." Consequently, understanding the linguistic – or multimodal – manifestations of metaphors aids in justifying the existence of the underlying conceptual metaphors (Kövecses and Benczes, 2010: 4), which in turn provides valuable information on "shared experiential knowledge" for strategic implementation in global and local advertising campaigns (Pérez-Sobrino, 2019: 22).

Before the full analytical framework is presented in Chapter 5, the following subchapter will introduce some concepts of multimodal discourse analysis as the final element of the theoretical framework.

4.2 Multimodal discourse analysis

> "Being a distinctive type of specialized discourse, the marketing discourse features a series of characteristics that differentiate it from the ordinary discourse." (Burcea, 2014: 607)

Whenever language or other semantic systems are being reviewed, tools of discourse analysis are at the forefront. As a qualitative research method, discourse analysis provides tools for looking at the data on its microlevel, focussing on the features and characteristics that make it the way it is (Mäntynen and Pietikäinen, 2009). Instead of looking for patterns or statistical relevance, the focus is on describing the phenomenon. In Kress' (2010 : 79) words, a thorough examination of the nature and characteristics of the data is relevant to multimodality because "[d]ifferent modes offer different potentials for making meaning. These differing potentials have a fundamental effect on the choice(s) of mode in specific instances of communication."

Written text is built up of variants such as words, clauses, sentences, organised through grammar and syntax; affected by graphic resources such as punctuation, font, size, bolding, spacing and colour; then further organised by the characteristics of layout, genre and structure (Kress, 2010: 79). In contrast, visual modes are built up of spatial characteristics and affordances such as positioning, lines, colours and shapes, which influence individua depictions (Kress, 2010: 82). As was discussed in earlier chapters, the organisation of discourse in a hypertextual environment is then further influenced by the pragmatics of use in context (Miles, 2000). While written content is traditionally organised and consumed linearly, the logic of spatial information is different (Kress, 2010: 81), which creates a need for different methods of analysing multimodal content that exists within both spaces. In a qualitative study, such as the present one, where the aim is to understand and carefully describe the characteristics of the multimodal content, multimodal discourse analysis as an approach provides tools for analysis on the microlevel to be able to reflect the semantic choices against the larger context (or, macrolevel) of the study (Mäntynen and Pietikäinen, 2009). In this instance, the discourse is analysed and reviewed in the context of multimodal metaphorical discourse, and in a larger context, argumentative website marketing discourse. Discourse analysis provides a frame in which semantic resources are viewed as constructing their meaning in their social context (Mäntynen and Pietikäinen, 2009) – a fitting parallel for the fundamentals of hypertextuality and multimodality presented in earlier chapters.

Therefore, in the following chapters, the data in the present study are thoroughly presented and analysed on a multimodal level to provide a nuanced understanding of its characteristics. In practice, the analysis consists of lexical analysis of the text, for example reflecting on the verb choices, adjectives, sentence structures and metaphorical inferences made in the written data. Similarly, the visual features are described in detail and analysed in terms of characteristics like positioning, colours or representation and reflected against the metaphorical construct. After a thorough analysis on the discursive level, the content is reflected against the larger framework provided by argumentation theory and marketing practices to underline the multimodality of the message and how it contributes to building the argument of the campaign. The analytical framework used in the study will be presented in further detail in the following chapter.

5 Methodology

Now that the groundwork for the present study has been laid, the focus will shift towards the specific research questions and methods that will be utilised in an effort to answer them. The chapter starts with a presentation of the research questions and aims of the study, followed by a presentation of the data as well as reasoning for the data selection and methods of collection. Before beginning the analysis in Chapter 6, subchapter 5.3 will present the full analytical framework established for the present study.

5.1 Research questions and aims of the study

This study aims to characterise the multimodal discourse utilised in an argumentative website context to promote eye health. A particular focus will be on presenting the multimodal elements that contribute to the argumentative campaign discourse built around a contextual metaphor. The analysis will therefore be realised in two steps; first through multimodal discourse analysis, followed by a reflection of the modes against their metaphorical functions and finally, argumentative structures. The key aim of the study is to illustrate the multimodal role and functions of various communicative resources in an argumentative marketing context by highlighting the role of interaction of the elements in developing and understanding website discourse.

These topics will be addressed through three primary research questions:

1) What are the features and characteristics of the multimodal elements used to build arguments in the website presented and how does their interplay contribute to the discourse?
2) How does the metaphorical concept enable multimodal argumentative discourse?
3) How is the argumentative structure realised in the nonlinear, hypertextual and multimodal website space?

The questions will be discussed through analysis on two levels: on the microlevel, Question 1 and elements of Questions 2 and 3 will be addressed through the means of multimodal discourse analysis of the verbal, visual and hypertextual modes at use in the content, structure and design of the website. The ‘modes’ will be presented and analysed as individual but overlapping elements contributing to the argument as a whole, with the intent of constructing a complete and cohesive understanding of

the multimodal entity that builds the argument at hand. Before beginning the analysis, the view of 'mode' in the present study will be revisited in Chapter 5.3. Through the discourse-level analysis, the elements and their role in the argumentative process and metaphorical discourse will be reflected against the theoretical background. Towards the second half of the analysis, the microlevel analysis will be drawn together on the macrolevel by organising the analysed elements into categories of modes, metaphorical value and argumentative stages. Throughout the analysis, hypertextuality, multimodality and nonlinearity as the key concepts of communication in the CMC space will be present to address Question 3.

In addition to characterising the discourse and its argumentative presentation, the study aims to further explore the possibility of the existence of a multimodal argument as a complex structure over narrowly visual or verbal arguments. Finally, it aims to reflect the opportunities and understanding all of the above creates for online marketing discourse.

While the theoretical background of the study draws from argumentation studies and social marketing, the aim of the present study is not to evaluate the effectiveness of the argument or contribute to research regarding its contributions to a specific societal context or question. Equally, it does not aim to evaluate which modes or elements contribute to the argument more than others. From a marketing efficiency perspective, the present study does not take a stance on whether the campaign is successful in communicating its argument or whether the marketing goals were reached, for example through new users of the online platform. Instead, the study aims to provide an overview of the interplay and nature of the multiple modes that are at use in the argumentative discourse of the campaign website in question. The analysis will provide a characterisation of the discursive and multimodal value of the elements of the website, viewing all modes as equally relevant in communicating the argument. The argument will be analysed from the viewpoint of how the interplay of all of the elements contributes to communicating the message and potentially prompting action by the user (i.e. ending the argument by accepting the claims).

5.2 Data selection and collection

This chapter consists of two subchapters. The first subchapter presents the contextual background of the chosen data and the reasons for selecting it. In the second subchapter, the data itself as well as the

methods of collecting and transcribing it for the study are presented. The reasoning and potential limitations of the chosen data will also be discussed.

5.2.1 Presenting the campaign and cause

"Look deeper" was an eye health campaign realised by Australian digital health platform MyHealth1st, under the sub-brand EyeHealth1st. MyHealth1st is an online platform, launched in 2012, that offers customers the ability to book health care appointments online. According to their website (MyHealth1st, 2020), "MyHealth1st provides revolutionary digital solutions for the health sector. Our digital solutions help practices increase bookings, improve retention, and enhance efficiency and profitability." For optometrists, they promise an uplift in bookings and better customer retention. The site claims that nearly 70% of independent optometrists in Australia are listed on the site.

In 2019, the brand launched a campaign to promote the importance of regular eye check-ups for everyone over 40. According to MyHealth1st (EyeHealth1st, 2020), the campaign included online marketing, such as emails, social media and websites, as well as marketing in print, tv and in health practices. The campaign's aim was to reach 5 million Australians every month and get them to take action "before it's too late".

The campaign uses a plethora of visual and linguistic cues to argue that many eye diseases can progress significantly without any symptoms and therefore might not be detected before it is too late. The rhetoric is built around facts, metaphors and visuals to present the potential problems that might occur and to make the case that regular eye check-ups for anyone over the age of 40 can help them get the necessary treatment on time, and hence are crucial to bring down the number of cases of preventable blindness in Australia. The visual staple of the campaign was the 'eyesberg' (Messy Collective, 2020), a metaphorical iceberg made up of an eye.

Although the campaign was realised as a multichannel effort, the focus of analysis in this study is the website, "Look deeper" (https://www.lookdeeper.com.au). Like often in digital marketing, other elements of the campaign – like social media posts and video marketing – directed the user to visit the website for more information. The website is visually striking, and visuals elsewhere followed the same design, so the user journey was cohesive and effective. The action they are hoping the user takes is booking an eye appointment, which is made clear through numerous prompts on the site.

While it can be argued that an equally important goal of this campaign was to promote the platform itself for the use of booking the appointment, the focus in the present study is on the use of argumentation to prompt targeted users to 1) understand the severity of the possible problems that may lie ahead without taking action, and 2) take the appropriate action. For the purposes of the present study, it is irrelevant whether the audience uses the EyeHealth1st platform to book the appointment or chooses to do it through other means. The reasoning for choosing the website for analysis over other elements of the campaign will be further discussed in the following subchapter.

The *Look deeper* campaign was chosen as the data to analyse for a number of reasons. First, it promotes beneficial health behaviour, hence it fits the description for a social marketing campaign. By trying to influence user behaviour, the campaign is inherently argumentative by nature. The campaign discourse, next to being simply argumentative, utilises a multitude of verbal, visual and hypertextual modes to communicate the message through a metaphorical concept, making it a complex yet fascinating entity to analyse from all the perspectives that are relevant in multimodal website discourse. The website is specifically built for marketing discourse with the user in mind, which not only fuels a clear argumentative function, but also permits an assumption of some level of cognitive knowledge at the use of those who planned the campaign. Through all these elements, the chosen data enables a nuanced look into the argumentative and multimodal functions that can be utilised to create website marketing discourse for a good cause and simultaneously, exemplifies the role of multimodal interplay in marketing communications.

The following chapter will present the specific data and the methods of collection in more detail.

5.2.2 Choosing and presenting the specific data

The data in the current study consists of the campaign website, *Look deeper* (lookdeeper.com.au). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the full campaign was a multichannel effort including offline and online elements. The campaign website could be considered the biggest contributor to the campaign, seeing the immensity of its argumentative value compared to the other elements. The site remains online to this day and could possibly still drive the occasional user to perform the desired action, despite its "inactive" campaign status. This is one of two main reasons to limit the data set to the website alone: it contains all the same visual and verbal elements as other connected marketing efforts, like social media posters or billboards, but in a much larger scale and with more content. Bateman et al. (2017: 152) specify that one of the key requirements for corpus-based data is being

sufficiently broad in terms of data and variation to answer the research questions posed. While it could be argued that analysing a connected poster or a social media post could provide additional value in terms of narrowing down the elements that build the argument, the website content has the clearest delivery of the argumentative structure and provides the most value for a multimodal, structural analysis of the modes utilised. From a marketing perspective, elements in the other channels serve as the first nudge towards the argumentative act, which could be viewed as similar to the opening stage in van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2003) model of argumentation. By clicking on a link in a social media post or typing in the URL from a billboard, the user accepts the premise to find out more, to be persuaded through the argument. This sets the stage for the argumentative process to begin on the website, making the website the obvious choice for analysing the argumentative discourse.

The data of the present study is the full campaign website with all of its interactive, visual and textual elements. The data was collected as screenshots of the website. The full data set consists of 16 figures: 5 full-screen visuals of the site, 5 captures of details of the site, and 5 captures of "microsites" that open up by clicking on the prompts on the site. The screenshots were taken in February and March 2020. Figure 5.1 below presents examples of the types of data being analysed. A full view of the website outline, without a breakdown into screen views, is included as Appendix 1 (Messy Collective, 2020).

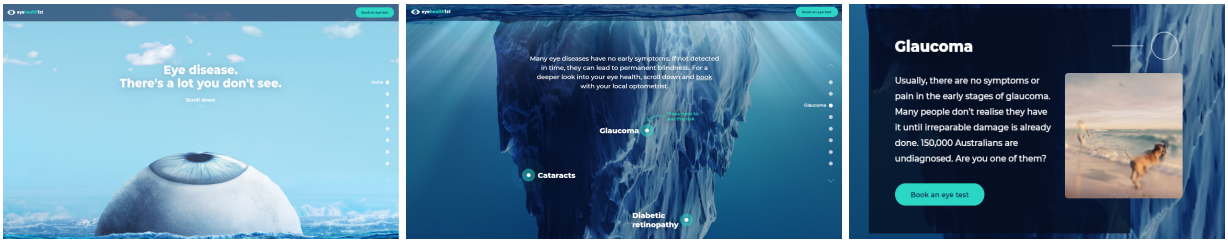

Figure 5.1: Examples of research data

Due to the static nature of the recorded data, some interactive elements of the website are not fully presented in the static screen captures, but where relevant, the nature of the interaction is verbally explained and reviewed in the analysis. Additionally, it is worth noting that all 3-4 screens (depending on the size of the user's monitor) of the site form an interactive, multimodal entity that enables the user to jump back and forth between the elements. While this is taken into consideration in the multimodal nature of the analysis and supported by theories of website nonlinearity (Degano, 2013) presented in previous chapters, the data is presented linearly for the purposes of the analysis. The

verbal elements present in the data are transcribed into text, while the visual factors contributing to their structure (e.g. font typeface or size, colours) are reviewed alongside them. The visual modes are presented as images, but characterised and analysed verbally. While acknowledging the conflict of doing this in a study of multimodality, no other format of transcription is currently capable of characterising the visual structure and elements as accurately and thoroughly for the purpose of the analysis, as was also put forth by Forceville (2010: 14). Towards the end of the analysis, the focus will shift from presenting the linear and individual elements to analysing the complexity of the website, its elements and their contribution to the argument.

Due to the scale of the present study, the data are limited to only one case campaign and its website. This allows for a thorough analysis of all the multimodal elements at play in building the argument and maintains the integrity of the study. In a larger scale, the research could include further examples of modes of argumentation in a marketing context, including other marketing or communication channels, different formats of websites and other actionable goals. Further discussion on possible future research will be presented in Chapter 7.

5.3 Analytical framework

The analysis of data in the present study relies primarily on Tseronis' (2018) view of the importance of the interaction of modes in the analysis of multimodal discourse. From this perspective, the analysis characterises the data and views all modes as equally important contributors to the argumentative rhetoric. In his words, "it considers each mode as realizing different communicative work and as contributing equally to meaning depending on the communicative goals that need to be achieved each time." (ibid., 2018: 49)

Before moving forward with the multimodal analysis, it might be useful to revisit the understanding of 'mode' in this study. In Chapter 3.2, a mode was defined based on Stöckl (2004) as:

1. Impossible to define through path of perception,
2. Possible to be interpreted through various media
3. Likely to overlap and form sub-modes

With this distinction in mind, it could be theorised that a mode is inherently 'multimodal', and it would be counterproductive for the purposes of this analysis to try to clearly define which element falls into which artificial category of mode. A similar view of multimodality has been presented by Bateman et al. (2017). With respect to Tseronis' (2018) view of multimodal argumentation that prioritises form over content and looks at each mode and its characteristics as equally important in communicating the argument, the 'modes' that construct the argument in this analysis are roughly categorised as visual, verbal or hypertextual in nature. Images, colours and animations are typical examples of visual modes presented in the following analysis. Verbal modes are most often written text, in the form of short headlines, longer subtitles, full paragraphs or imperative 'calls to action'. The term 'hypertextual' is used to characterise elements that are categorically interactive or nonlinear in nature and typical to the web environment, such as elements of site navigation and other hyperlinks that can be implemented through either visuals or text, or both (see, for example, the definition of 'nodes' in Carter, 2003). For a large majority of the elements presented in the following analysis, the 'modes' can be simultaneously visual and verbal, and in some cases also hypertextual (for instance, in the case of a button on the site). To this end, the term 'element' is frequently used to characterise the different parts of the site that are being analysed, allowing the analysis to underline the multimodal nature of the content. In previous research, terms like 'item' (Kok, 2004) and 'cluster' (Baldry and Thibault, 2006) have also been used for similar structures.

Based on this view, multimodal elements are outlined and recognised as units – or, argumentative modes (Groarke, 2015) –, primarily characterised based on their multimodal features. The elements are characterised through methods of multimodal discourse analysis, as described in the previous chapter. Throughout the analysis, the semantic choices are reflected against the conceptual metaphor that guides the linguistic and visual acts of making meaning. These analytical tools allow a comprehensive description of the characteristics of the elements and how they create meaning and contribute to the full message of the site. Through the distinction, the analysis is focused on the interaction of the elements and how they work together to create meaning. In that frame, the multimodal entity that has been built through the elements contributing to the argument will be analysed.

As defined in Chapter 3., argumentative discourse is fundamentally built with the intention of resolving a disagreement, defending a point of view, or stopping a disagreement from happening before it begins (van Eemeren, 2013; Groarke, 2015). In the online environment, the disagreement is often implied, but the evidence used to try to provoke a change in behaviour can be seen as an

argumentative act. The emphasis of the analysis is on the *how,* exploring the multimodal entity that is used to construct an argument, but argumentation theory guides the process in the sense that the elements will be analysed from the viewpoint of how they contribute to the argumentative structure.

The structure of the argument will be reflected based on an adaptation of Degano's (2013) classification of the rhetorical moves in website argumentation. The core moves will be seen as follows:

1. Stating the campaign's aim
2. Presenting the support for the argument
3. Call to action

+ Establishing the brand's legitimacy

Move 2 could be seen as corresponding to van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2003) argumentation stage. As an additional move, establishing the brand's legitimacy will be reviewed from the perspective of brand credibility presented on the website.

Facilitated by this framework, the analysis will review modes and their characteristics through the methods of discourse analysis while keeping the main focus on the multimodal argument that they build, highlighting their interaction in making meaning.

6 Analysis

In this chapter, the website *Look deeper* will be analysed in terms of its multimodal argumentative rhetoric. The data set is presented in three main blocks, roughly to represent the three screens that open up while scrolling down the site. The data are presented as screen captures of the site, followed by a written account of the contents. Each block is then analysed in terms of the multimodal elements in it, reflecting against the wider framework of the conceptual metaphor and the argumentative genre of the discourse. After careful characterisation of the full data, the contents are analysed in terms of their contribution to the multimodal argument, categorised into moves of argumentation (Degano, 2013), collaboratively communicated by the elements of the full site.

The first step to beginning the analysis is recognising the argument. To summarise what was presented in the previous chapter, the argument of the campaign could be defined as follows: *Some severe eye diseases do not present themselves in obvious symptoms before it is too late to treat them, but an eye health professional can spot them early*. In the following analysis, each screen of the website will be reviewed from a visual, verbal and multimodal perspective to form a wholesome picture of the argument and its presentation. In reviewing the discourse, its semantic choices are reflected against the metaphorical concept at the core of the narrative.

The first element to analyse is not a part of the website screens per se, but considering the value it has in website design and the user experience, the site headline is included as part of the analysis. It is also a very visible part of the hypertextual structure of the website, as an element that is not directly part of the site, but acts almost as a title of the book. If the user finds the page by typing in the URL (visible in the offline posters for the campaign) or clicking on a link on a promoted post on social media, it is likely they will see the address bar or site headline before the rest of the site loads. For this reason, it might play its part in building the argument. Figure 6.1 below presents a view of the site title within the Google Chrome browser.

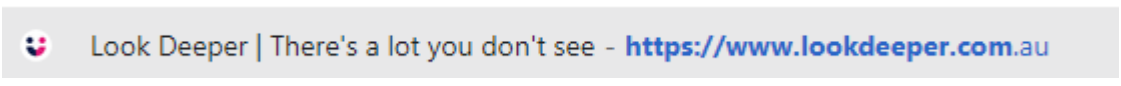

Figure 6.1: Site details: URL bar/website title

As part of the website architecture, the site title, visible in the browser address bar as well as at the top of the window or tab where the site is open, is a small but significant detail summarising the

argument. While it might not be the first thing a site visitor pays attention to, if they pay attention to it at all, this small headline including the campaign name and the main thesis of the argument is a subtle way to arouse curiosity to explore further. The title reads: “Look Deeper | There’s a lot you don’t see”. While the site title makes no obvious reference to eye health, it also works to strengthen the argument for a site visitor who is already familiar with the content of the site, hence adding to the nonlinear nature of the argument. The small icon on the left of the bar is the logo of the overarching initiative, MyHealth1st, that is only present at the very bottom of the site.

The following subchapter presents and analyses the first screen of the website.

6.1 The tip of the ‘eyesberg’

The same line of argument continues when looking into the site content. Figure 6.2 below presents the first screen a user encounters when landing on the website.

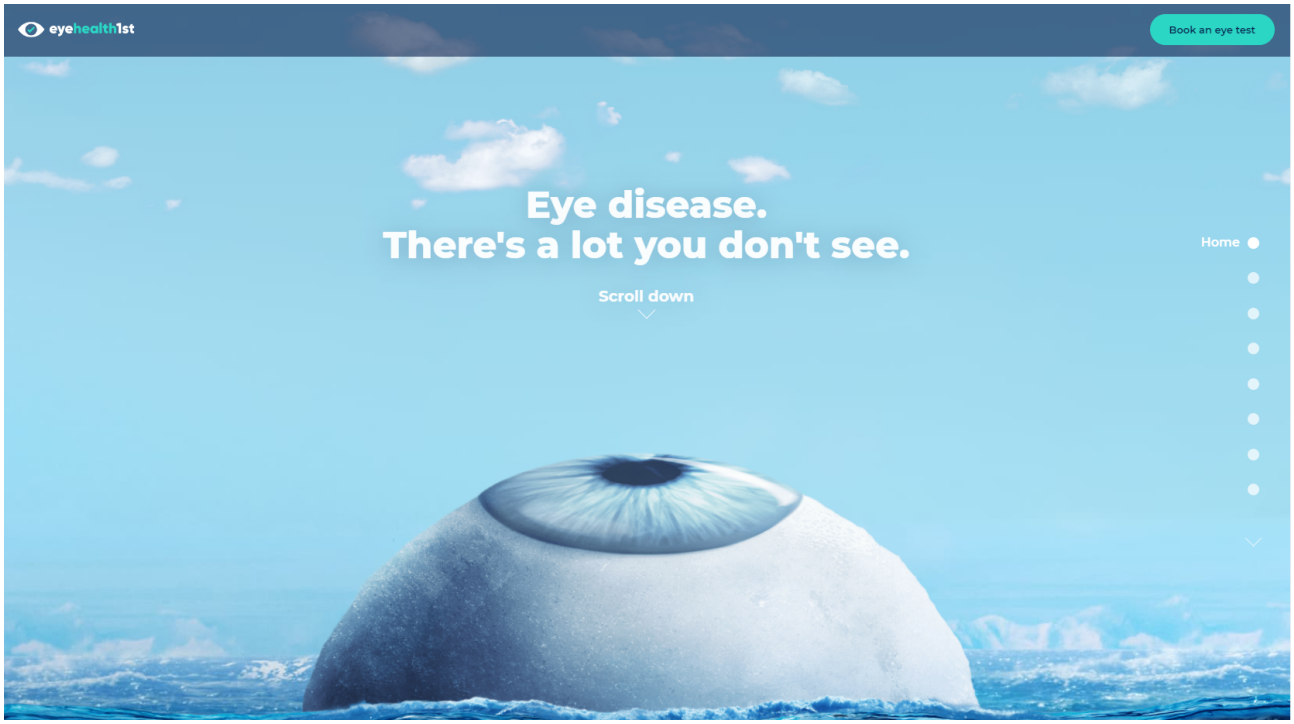

Figure 6.2: First screen of lookdeeper.com.au

The narrative and visual landscape of the campaign is built around the linguistic metaphor “the tip of the iceberg”, often used to refer to issues that are bigger than it would seem at first instance. On a

conceptual level, the metaphorical stance of the campaign could be summarised as “eye (health) is an iceberg”, making a cognitive inference to the linguistic presentation of the metaphor.

On the first screen, there is a moving picture[1] of a massive eye floating up and down, in what would seem like a freezing cold ocean, with snow and icebergs in the distance and some clouds in the clear blue sky. In the interactive online environment, the clouds move slowly in the sky, much like they would in real life. It could be seen as a further metaphor for some sort of normality; the world keeps turning despite the giant eyeball floating in the ocean, much like your eye health will likely not change the events in the world around you. At the same time, it strengthens the conceptual metaphor of “eye is an iceberg”, presenting as if the eye belongs where it is.

The colour scheme is entirely built up of shades of light blue, white and grey – colours that one would expect to see in a cold environment like the Antarctic. The eye figure strictly follows the colour scheme and could almost blend into the background, if it was not so overpowering as an intrusive element in the picture (much like an actual iceberg would be, too). On the surface, the eye appears healthy and in focus, strengthening both the metaphor and the argument that not everything is visible on the surface.

The gigantic eye figure is seemingly out of place in the ocean, but the metaphor translates very clearly to anyone familiar with it. It is worth noting that the campaign targets – assumedly – natively English-speaking Australians over the age of 40, so it is fairly safe to assume that the targeted audience is familiar enough with the metaphor for the visual to prompt an immediate cognitive response. The eye has a glimmering, ice-like surface, in turn strengthening the mental connection to the iceberg. The left side of the eye has a darker shade, somewhat like a shadow. Visually, this could hint at the problems beneath the surface, where the tone of the message and severity of the issues get darker very fast.

The top of the screen includes a slim banner in a darker shade of blue, clearly to distinguish from the main visual. The top left corner shows the brand logo. In the top right corner, there is a clear interactive button with a call to action (CTA), in a shade of teal blue that is also present in the company logo, but nowhere else on the site. The colour choices build a clear visual connection

[1] *Due to the static nature of the data, the interactive nature of the site is not presented in Figure 6.2*

between the CTA and the brand, subtly promoting the business aim of the campaign. The role of branding for the argumentative structure will be further addressed in Chapter 6.4.

Finally, the right-hand side of the screen includes a line of 8 symmetric dots, which would have little to no relevance without the help of the textual cues next to them. Through the interactive design, the dots and their descriptions have a navigational purpose throughout the site. This characteristic will equally be further explored later in the analysis.

The first screen of the site is very heavily visual and relies only on a couple of textual elements. In the first top half of the screen, there is a simple statement: “Eye disease. There’s a lot you don’t see.”, presented below in Figure 6.3.

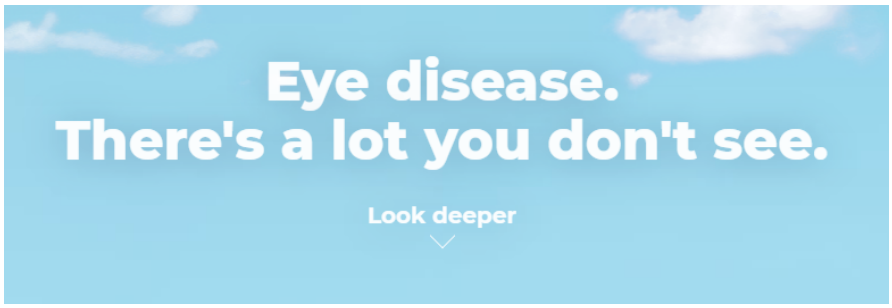

Figure 6.3: Site details: titles on the first screen

The message is communicated simply and bluntly, without even a full sentence. The visual appearance of the text reinforces the emphasis; the font is big and blunt. The first row of text is the first textual element on the site, apart from the title in the top bar, and only contains the words “Eye disease.” Ending a phrase that would not grammatically even constitute a sentence in a full stop reflects the severity of the claim. As discussed in Chapter 2.2, using CMC cues such punctuation in this way to convey tonality is part of replacing the elements of verbal speech that CMC discourse does not contain (Liebman and Gergle, 2016). The second row follows the statement with the double entendre “There’s a lot you don’t see.”. One carefully crafted sentence simultaneously refers to the metaphor of the iceberg in the visual (you can only see the tip), the nature of the asymptomatic eye disease (there might be issues before you notice them), the fact that the symptoms are literally not visible (they do not necessarily affect your eyesight directly yet) as well as the potential visual impairment the issues could cause (you literally might not see it all anymore some day, if you do not act).

Underneath the primary textual element, there is a short interactive and hypertextual element that changes from “Scroll down” to “Look deeper” in a regular interval[2]. Both are clearly navigational calls to action, specifying what is expected of the user next. “Scroll down” says explicitly what to do with little reference to the campaign language, rather more to do with site functionality and expected behavioural patterns on the internet. The optional text, “Look deeper”, is not only a reference to the name of the campaign, but also builds on the metaphorical narrative of something happening beneath the surface.

On the next row, the text is followed by the tip of a downwards arrow, a symbol that has come to signify “scroll down” or “swipe down”, courtesy of numerous smartphone apps, where you change a page, follow a link or perform an action by swiping your finger across the screen. In contrast to traditional textual elements, hyperactive links can be considered a mode in their own right due to their distinct nature and functional purpose in the discourse. Similarly, many other elements of the site contain text but also other elements, such as colours or links, already making them multimodal by nature.

The site view contains many visual, textual and hypertextual elements that depend on each other to contribute to the argument. This supports Tseronis’s (2008) theory of multimodal argumentation: looking at the individual elements helps in interpreting the building blocks, but it is not enough to call it a cohesive argument. Some of the elements could theoretically work on their own: “Eye disease. There’s a lot you can see.” makes sense on its own but reads more like a simple claim than an argument. All the elements are needed to work together to build a strong argument. Like Forceville (2017) pointed out, the core of the multimodal analysis in the interaction of the elements.

The positioning of the eye in the lower half of the screen works for the “tip of the iceberg” metaphor: there is plenty of screen space reserved for the clear blue skies above the stormy and icy ocean. The gaze of the eye is clearly directed at the text element above and the animation simulates floating on the ocean waves, subtly directing the user’s attention to the title. Although the text “Eye disease. There’s a lot you can’t see” does not directly refer to the iceberg metaphor, the combination of the visual and the text makes the implication clear. The text is written in a big, bold font that demands attention and centred on the page in a way that makes it impossible to ignore.

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[2] *Like in Figure 6.2, the interactive elements of the site are not accurately depicted in the static data, and hence are described verbally.*

Typically to web design, the site contains hyperlinks, navigational elements, such as a menu or the top bar, and branding, each of which helps the user navigate the site. The top bar is a typical element in websites, which carries the brand logo and an immediate call to action button. The two details of the site are presented below in Figures 6.4 and 6.5.

Figure 6.4: Site details: logo

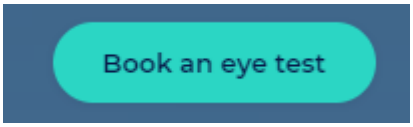

Figure 6.5: Site details: CTA button

Shown in Figure 6.4, the logo – situated in the top left-hand corner of the site layout in Figure 6.1 – consists of a visual element in the outline of an eye with a check mark in place of the iris. The combination of symbols mimics a check list item that has been taken care of, translating a feeling of accomplishment and creating a clear story about the brand's mission. To the right of the visual element, the lowercase text reads "eyehealth1st" in a chunky typeface similar to the one used across the site, with the words "eye" and "1st" in the same white as the symbol of the eye, and "health" in the same teal blue as the check symbol. Both blue elements are central elements of the visual entity they belong to, using the colours of the brand. On the top left, there is a call to action (CTA) button, in the same teal blue as the details of the logo, which simply states "Book an eye test". Buttons like this with a direct, almost demand-like imperative call to action are typical to web design and online marketing, with an aim to clearly communicate the desired action to the user. Using the same colour in the logo and the button creates an instant mental bridge between the two, prompting user trust in the button. Although not evident at first, this plays a role in the argumentative structure of the site as well by reinforcing the brand's legitimacy, as detailed in Degano (2013).

Both the logo and the button are hyperlinked 'nodes' (Carter, 2003), meaning that clicking them leads to a site action. Clicking on the logo simply refreshes the page. In some cases, clicking on a brand logo commonly leads to a page with more information about the brand. On a campaign website such as this that focuses heavily on promoting a cause, this might lead to two possible outcomes in terms

of the argument. In the case that the user expects to find more information about the brand by clicking on the logo, it not happening might weaken the legitimacy of the brand (i.e. the entity presenting the argument) in the eyes of the user, and consequently weaken the argument the site is trying to convey. While this might affect the argumentative strength of the site in the moment, it might be a conscious choice made by the designer of the user interface. If clicking on the logo would direct the user to another site (which, in this instance, would be outside of the domain of the campaign site), it is very likely the user might not return to finish reading the original site, hence interrupting the argumentative process altogether. In this sense, a small negative impact on the overall argument might be necessary to keep the argumentative process going.

Although the top bar only consists of two simple elements, it builds a strong backbone for the argument without explicitly mentioning anything about the reasoning behind it. The logo as a multimodal entity is enough on its own to communicate the brand's vision of the value of eye health, and the visual connection to the button that is established through the shared colour scheme provides a logical continuation for a course of action in case no further argument is necessary. Clicking on the "Book an eye appointment" button provides the user with a shortcut to skip through the rest of the content on the site. Instead, it sends the user to the very bottom of the page where the desired action – booking an eye appointment – takes place, strengthening the emphasis on what the entire site is designed to convince the user to do.

The site navigation bar on the right-hand side of the site contains visual, textual and hypertextual elements, and it informs the user that there is more to discover on the site. Functionally, it also serves as a progress bar – a feature that has psychologically been proven to make users more likely to complete an action in a CMC context (Myers, 1985). Equally, it provides a verbal table of contents of the topics covered on the page. This way of grouping things into artificial sets (known as "pseudo-set framing" in psychology) also makes a user more likely to complete the full set, as has been proven in the case of charitable donations, purchase or gambling behaviour (Barasz et al., 2017). For now, suffice to say that the value of site navigation for the desired action is evident, and its role in the argumentative structure will be further discussed in the final chapter of the analysis.

6.2 Beneath the surface

By scrolling down or clicking on the “look deeper” / ”scroll down” prompt, the user visually “dives” beneath the surface and discovers a plethora of issues hiding underneath. In this chapter, a similar analysis as in Chapter 5.1 will be conducted on the following screens, divided into textual, visual and multimodal functions that further contribute to the argument that was established in screen 1. Figures 6.6 and 6.7 below present the following screen views.

Figure 6.6: Second screen of lookdeeper.com.au

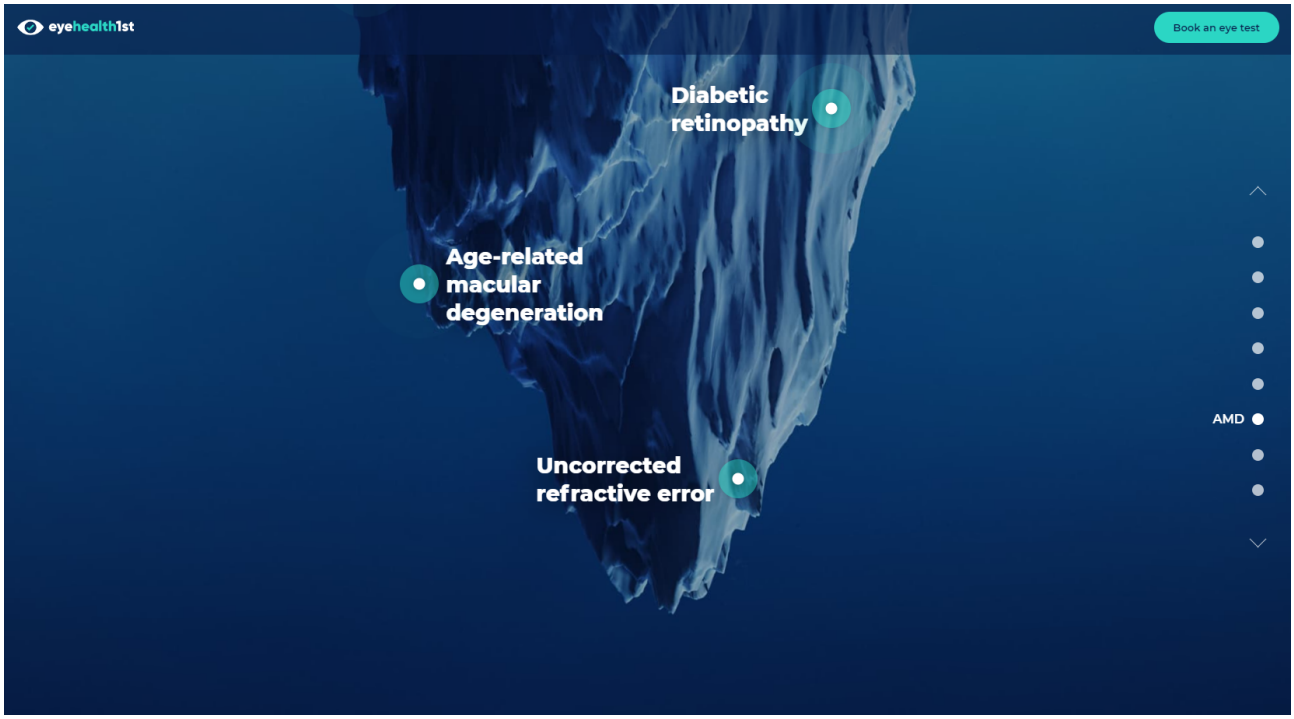

Figure 6.7: Second/third screen of lookdeeper.com.au

The change in the visual landscape between the first and the second screens is drastic to represent the darkness that lies beneath the surface: the light, carefree tones of blue are no longer present, and the screen is dominated by a dark blue. The visual depicts the icy part of the 'eyesberg' that lies beneath the surface. The visual is significantly more dominated by textual elements than in the first screen, and the interface reveals further text boxes when clicking on the hyperlinks. The bottom part of the iceberg looks chilling, uninviting and gets darker the deeper it gets. A number of eye diseases are listed with blinking spots in the base of the iceberg, so as to demand immediate attention. The spots are organised in a seemingly erratic matter, roughly located in the parts of the "eye" where the disease would appear. On first visit, an arrow with text points to the first element after the surface, prompting the user to click and find out more ("Press here to see the risk", see Figure 6.6).

Underneath the surface, the mood changes in terms of verbal output as well: there is no more clever wordplay. The first block of text underneath the surface starts straight with the facts, translating the hints from the first screen: *"Many eye diseases have no early symptoms. If not detected in time, they can lead to permanent blindness. For a deeper look into your eye health, scroll down and book with your local optometrist."* The text comes across as cold, almost technical, as if to make sure the user knows this is no joking matter. The structure of the paragraph is very clearly built to be an argument: Argument > Claim of the consequences > Suggested action, with the hyperlinked and underlined

word “book” as a direct prompt to do it. The paragraph alone is almost built to be a full argument within an argument, closely following the three steps of Degano’s (2013) model.

Despite the more serious tone, the brand voice stays consistent with the first screen with the use of the phrase “for a deeper look into your eye health”. The first paragraph makes no direct reference to the underlying links to more information about the specific diseases and instead, directly encourages booking an eye appointment. The arrow pointing at the first blinking point is accompanied by the words “Press here to see the risk”. The use of the word “the risk” follows in the same serious, almost medical tone, and leaves the user with practically three choices: leave the page in denial (or out of pure disinterest), click on “book” and perform the desired action to avoid discovering what have visually and verbally been painted to be gruesome details of the risks, or go clicking around and find out the specific problems that might await. Figure 6.8 below displays the view of the site with one of the microsites open. The small box pops up on top of the iceberg with a clear “X” marking the spot to exit and return to the main menu. The navigation bar on the right-hand side verbally reflects the element that is open on the site.

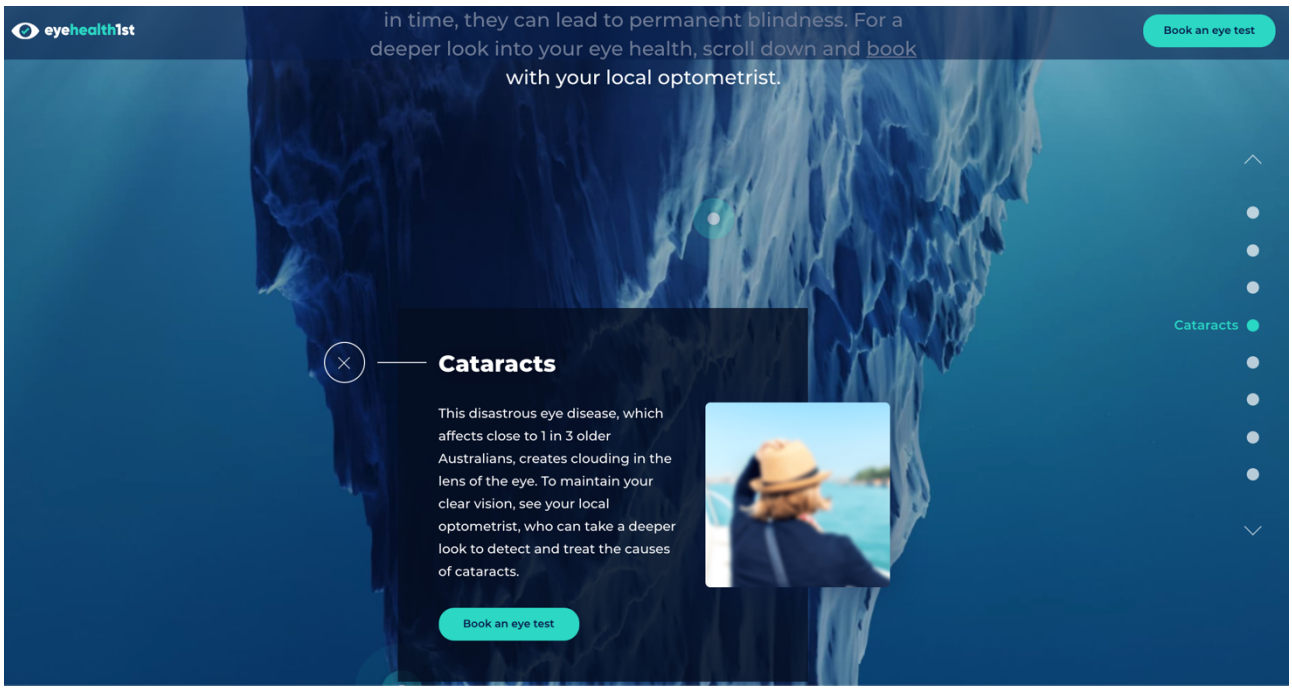

Figure 6.8: Screen 2 with open microsite

Screens 2 and 3 present the user with more interactive elements than screen 1: the view is built to present a visual overview of what is behind the hyperlinks, and the user is given the choice to either click and get more facts to support the argument, or accept it and take the action. In this sense, the

site is built out to nearly mimic a dialogue ("a discussion" in contrast to a "quasi-discussion" where facts are simply fed to the user, as defined by van Eemeren (2010: 3)). The user of the site can either accept the initial argument on the first screen and move on to the action, or virtually request more facts to back it up before accepting it. The option to take the shortcut to book an appointment is clearly available at all times, but never as a primary, intrusive element on the site.

Similarly to screen one, the top bar remains a stable element on the page at all times, and the navigation bar visually and verbally informs the user of their location on the site, now with arrows pointing up and down, hinting that there is more content in each direction.

The following paragraphs will focus on the multimodal features of the microsites that pop up when a user clicks on the prompts for each disease.

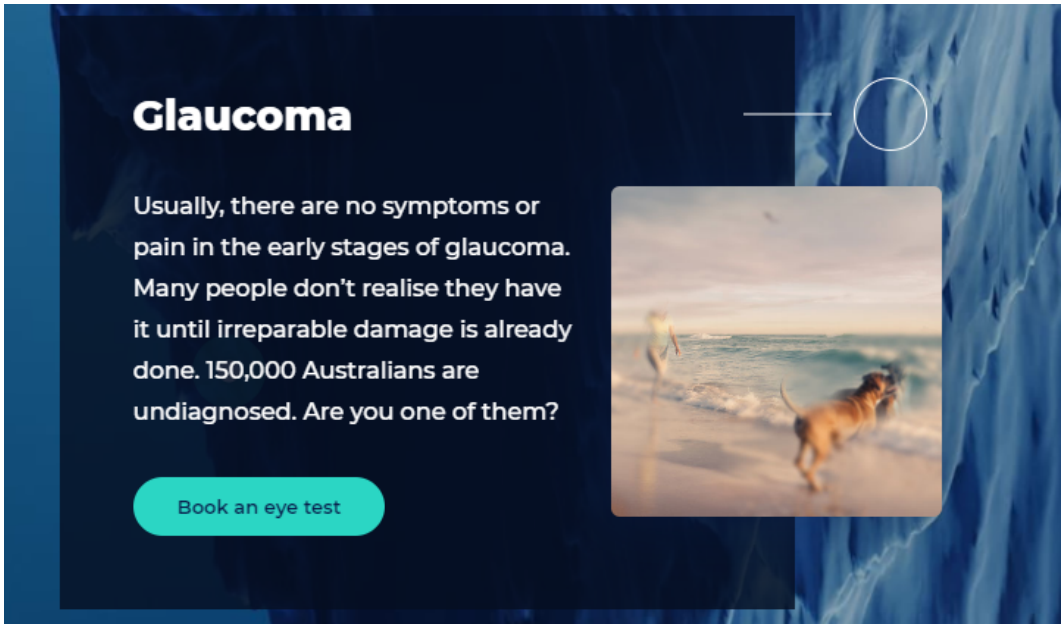

Figure 6.9: Microsites: Glaucoma

The first hyperlink reads "Glaucoma", and it opens up to a microsite including information about glaucoma (Figure 6.9). The text follows the same narrative as the site so far, hinting at invisible eye illness and directing the user to book an appointment. The headline simply states "Glaucoma", while the body text reads "Usually, there are no symptoms or pain in the early stages of glaucoma. Many people don't realise they have it until irreparable damage is already done. 150,000 Australians are undiagnosed. Are you one of them?". The tone is very serious, paints a dim picture of the future if left undiagnosed (emphasised by words like 'irreparable damage'), and addresses the user personally

as “you” to emphasise the effect. To add to the argumentative value, the text contains a specific number that gives scientific credibility to the claim and makes it easier for the reader to imagine themselves as part of this growing number. The impact of the value is evident and helps support the argument, despite complete lack of source information or reference for the number provided.

The paragraph is followed by a button with the prompt “Book an eye test”, visually and verbally exactly like the one the user is already used to seeing at the top of the page, again giving the user the option to move to the next phase of the argumentative act. The credibility that the button has built in the previous screen carries over through the visual appearance of the button, reminding of the brand logo.

The text block is accompanied by a blurry picture of a person and a dog playing on the beach. The shape of the person is blurry and unrecognisable in the background and the blurry dog catches most of the attention. Only the centre of the visual, staring into the waves of the ocean, is left somewhat clear. The colour scheme in the picture is bright, reflecting a happy moment, clouded by poor vision. The image effectively puts a moment spent with loved ones, one that could be personal and important, behind a blurry lens, depicting the impact of visual impairment on daily moments. The person and the dog in the picture are unrecognisable, leaving room for the viewer’s imagination to replace them with familiar faces. The visual is uncharacteristic to the argument built here so far: it is clearly built to fall on the emotional, irrational side of persuasion in a multimodal argumentative entity that otherwise heavily relies on facts.

The next microsite, located behind another hyperlink slightly down and to the left in the base of the iceberg, details the effects of another potential eye disease, cataracts. The pop-up microsite is presented below in Figure 6.10.

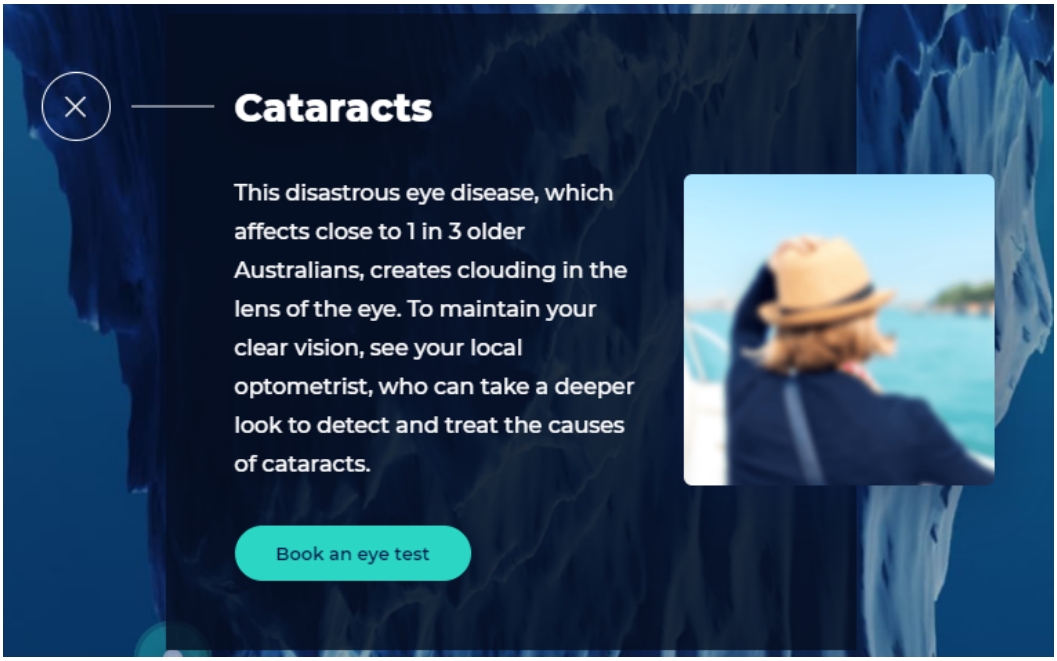

Figure 6.10: Microsites: Cataracts

The outline of the pop-up window is identical to the one in Figure 3.1, from titles, fonts, positioning to colours scheme. However, the tone of voice gets significantly more intense. Under the title "Cataracts", the text reads: "This disastrous eye disease, which affects close to 1 in 3 older Australians, creates clouding in the lens of the eye. To maintain your clear vision, see your local optometrist, who can take a deeper look to detect and treat the causes of cataracts.". Compared to Figure 6.9, where the most dramatic choice of word was "irreparable" towards the end of the paragraph, this paragraph starts off with "disastrous", leaving no time for second-guessing. The tone of voice builds on the arch of the argument – the user has clicked through this many links without jumping ahead to "Book an eye appointment", implying they need further arguments to be convinced. The level of information to support the argument is roughly the same, but the tone of voice implies that the argument is getting stronger, much like the eye disease in question perhaps is more severe than the previous one. Due to the nonlinear nature of the site – meaning a user might click on the link to read more about cataracts before the glaucoma link that linearly precedes it – the content of this block must also carry all the necessary argumentative value on its own.

Under the paragraph, the familiar "Book an eye test" button appears, once again granting the user the chance to complete the desired action. On the right, there is another blurry image, this time of the back of a blond female holding onto her hat and looking into the ocean – painting a sentiment of a carefree holiday somewhere sunny, only for your memories to be blurred by eye disease. This further builds on the emotional narrative of future eye disease affecting your time with your loved ones.

The remaining microsites, accessible through the links scattered throughout the bottom of the iceberg, follow the same visual pattern: title, paragraph of text, “Book an appointment” button, image demonstrating the possible damage to the eye. These blocks will be presented below in Figures 5.11. 5.12, and 5.13. Ultimately, their argumentative value in terms of functionality is similar to the two presented earlier in this chapter. Therefore, the remaining three will be analysed primarily through the linguistic choices of the text block and the visuals of the image attached to the paragraph.

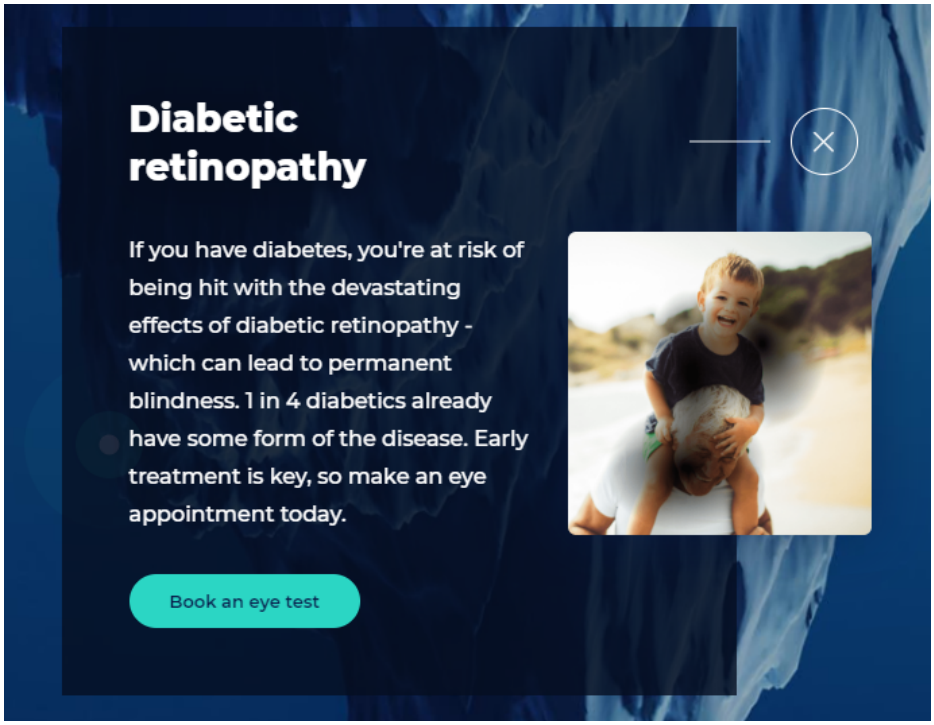

Figure 6.11: Microsites: Diabetic retinopathy

Figure 3.3, discoverable under the hyperlinked title “Diabetic retinopathy”, is more clearly targeted at a specific group of people: diabetics, people at risk for diabetes and perhaps their loved ones. Under the title, the paragraph reads: “If you have diabetes, you’re at risk of being hit with the devastating effects of diabetic retinopathy - which can lead to permanent blindness. 1 in 4 diabetics already have some form of the disease. Early treatment is key, so make an eye appointment today.”

The linguistic choices in this microsite are similar to the previous blocks. Although the first clause, “If you have diabetes”, clearly narrows down the audience of this threatening message, the following clause includes word choices like “being hit with the devastating effects” that can “lead to permanent blindness”. The tone is far from friendly and is simply there to give the reader the facts. Like in an

earlier block, the text provides statistics to support the claim, giving the diabetic reader a one in four chance of already having some form of the disease. The text ends in a familiar statement and a clear call to action: the worst-case scenario, in this case presented to be complete blindness, can be avoided by booking an eye appointment. As in the earlier microsites, the block is followed by a CTA button leading to the booking form.

The image that accompanies the text follows a similar pattern to the previous ones. It presents a young boy, a toddler, sitting on the floor, smiling and holding what can be assumed to be a toy. The surroundings around the boy, consisting mainly of a white background, are covered in a black haze resembling burn marks. Combined with the textual argument claiming possible blindness, the visual creates a daunting starting point for what could become complete vision loss, with more black haze covering the view than providing a clear sight of the boy. Using a picture of a child also offers a metaphorical window into the future and the argument is made dauntingly clear; if the disease progresses, you might not see the boy grow up. The combination of the facts presented in the text box and the emotional effect of the visual work together to strengthen the argument from each angle.

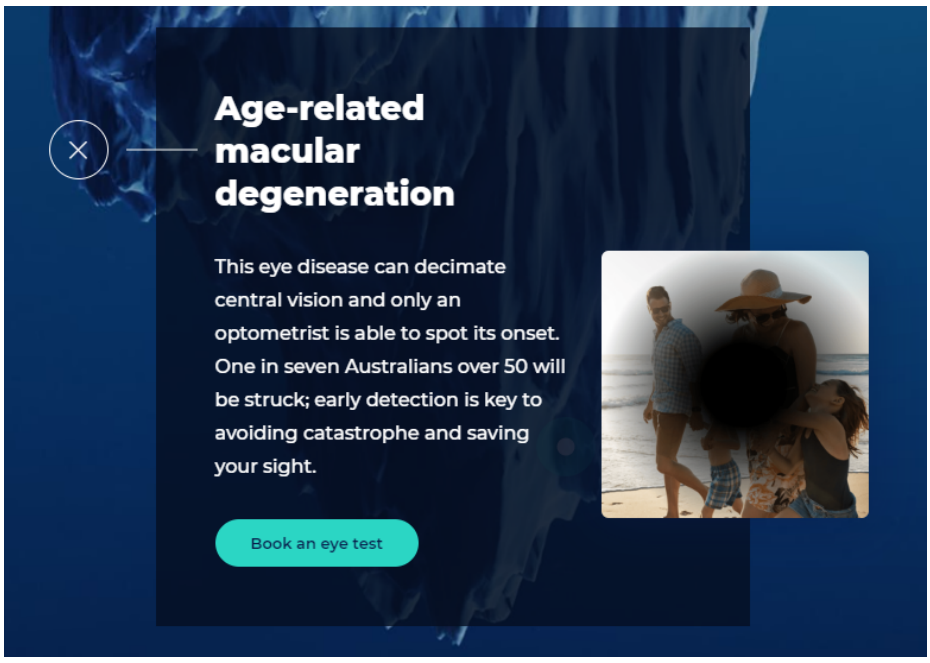

Figure 6.12: Microsites: Age-related macular regeneration

Figure 6.12 presents the next disease, “Age-related macular degeneration”, as the title reads. A text block that follows reads: “This eye disease can decimate central vision and only an optometrist is able to spot its onset. One in seven Australians over 50 will be struck; early detection is key to avoiding catastrophe and saving your sight.” The paragraph consists of the same elements as the

previous one, but the order has been slightly shuffled. The facts are presented first, including the impending effects of the disease and the main argument of the importance of booking an eye appointment. The threat is presented using the word “decimate”, a term with a slightly more medical ring to it compared to the hyperbolic terminology that has been previously used.

It is followed by a statistic, dramatised with the use of the word “struck”, painting a picture of sudden and irreparable onset. Although the number itself (“One in seven Australians over 50”, which translates to ~14%) presents a fairly optimistic outlook of the odds, the word choice makes the claim sound far more dramatic than in reality, perhaps in an attempt to vail the significance of the number and shake the reader just enough to book an appointment. This is further emphasised by the usual reminder that “early detection is key”, emphasised by slightly hyperbolic use of the word “catastrophe”. The final claim of “saving your eyesight” suggests that the effect is severe and the results, if not treated, might compromise the patient’s eyesight.

The visual that accompanies continues the narrative from the previous blocks. It shows a dark spot in the middle of the frame, blocking all view of what is behind. On the sides of the dark block is an unclear view of two adults, a man and a woman, walking on the beach holding the hands of two children. The adults, presumably portraying the parents of the children, are each gazing at the child on their left-hand side. The male figure can be seen wearing sunglasses and smiling at the child next to him. The child in the right corner, a girl, looks up at the blurry female figure holding her hand, with her hair flowing in the wind. A calm sea can be viewed in the background.

Although the visual narrative is similar to the images in the previous blocks, the visual in Figure 6.12 is the first one with a view of more than one person, portraying a traditional family. It is clear that the viewer is on the outside of the family, perhaps to suggest a relationship like being a grandparent, watching your children have a family of their own. This rhetoric would be fitting to the over-50s demographic of the disease presented. The black spot in the middle of the view paints – literally and metaphorically – a darker picture than the text element which it complements. Together with the image, the use of words like “catastrophe” in the verbal output no longer seems hyperbolic. The argument is strengthened by the interplay of the multimodal elements.

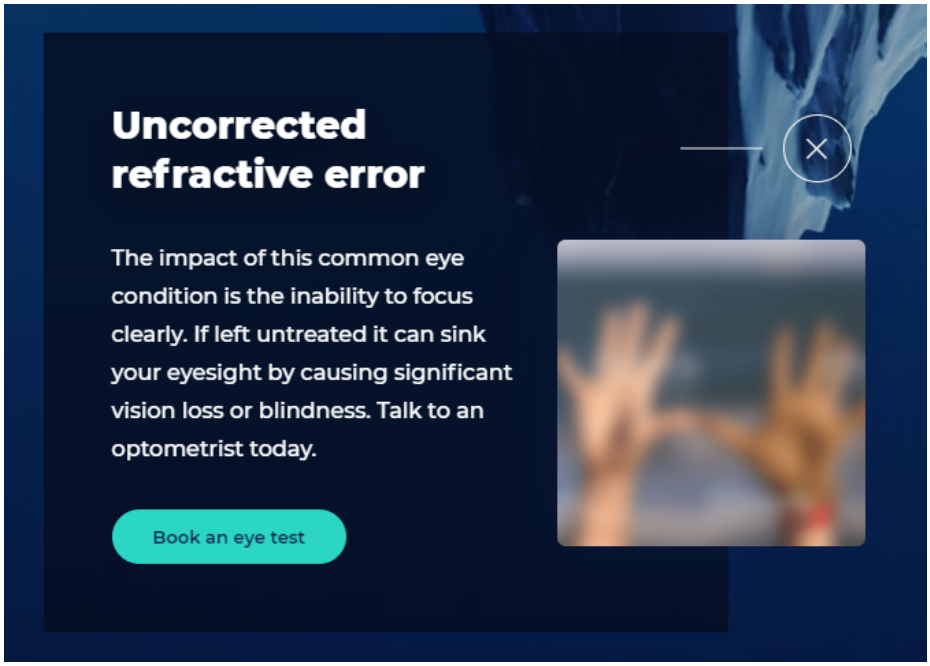

Figure 6.13: Microsites: Uncorrected refractive error

The fifth microsite, found at the very bottom of the iceberg on the main screen, presents the final disease, "Uncorrected refractive error". The paragraph reads: "The impact of this common eye condition is the inability to focus clearly. If left untreated it can sink your eyesight by causing significant vision loss or blindness. Talk to an optometrist today."

It could be expected that as the site progresses (the deeper you sink, metaphorically), the severity of the diseases presented would get more serious and the textual tone would follow a similar pattern. However, the initial tone of voice seems slightly more hopeful than in the preceding microsites. The first full sentence of the paragraph, "The impact of this common eye condition is the inability to focus clearly", presents the disease somewhat matter-of-factly, avoiding terms like "catastrophe", "irreparable" and "disastrous" that have been utilised in earlier paragraphs. The effect is, however, short-lived, as the following paragraph states: "If left untreated it can sink your eyesight by causing significant vision loss or blindness." Aside from the use of the metaphor of sinking, fitting to the overarching theme, the tone is very severe. There are no more statistics, no more explanations, simply an argument that seems almost threatening, followed with a prompt "Talk to an optometrist today.". As in the earlier blocks, the paragraph is followed by the CTA button.

The image next to the paragraph emphasises the argument of a "sinking" eyesight. The visual depicts the blurry outline of two hands, reached up towards the sky in front of the oceanside. The hands, each

of a different skin tone and hence viewed to belong to different people, meet at the tip of the thumbs. On the surface, the image could be seen to portray human connection and how vision plays a role in that. For those who understand the reference, hand movement is also a commonly used test for sight in eye health (see, for example, Marsden et al., 2014). It enables a measure for vision so poor that specific figures, like letters and numbers in charts can no longer be identified. The reference might be unclear to many users, but adds another implied level of meaning for those who are more familiar with the topic.

6.3 Time for action

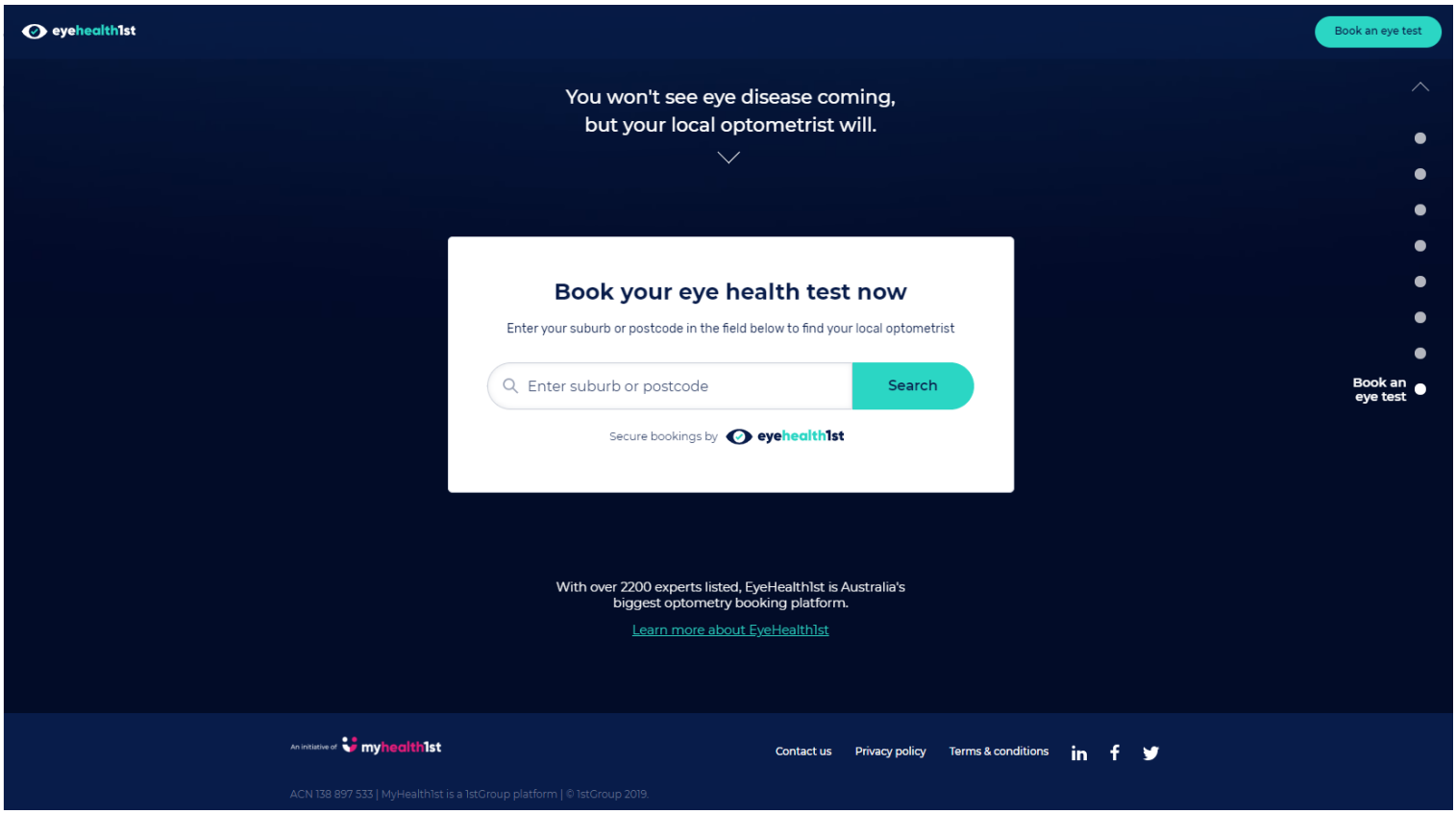

Figure 6.14: Final screen of lookdeeper.com.au

The final screen of the website (scrolling all the way down) reveals the bottom of the ocean, but functionally it is the most business-marketing oriented of all the screens. The view makes what is expected of the user very clear, and the brand presence and promotion is far more visible than in previous screens. The view on the screen in Figure 6.14 is also where the user lands when clicking on any of the CTA buttons scattered across the page.

The screen is dominated by a white box in the middle of a dark blue screen. The top bar follows the scroll, like it does for the entire site. The bottom of the page consists of another block containing brand information and site navigation, typical to websites. While the elements in the top bar do not appear to specifically contribute to the argument, they support the brand presence on the site and hence the argument's legitimacy (Degano, 2013). Unlike the top bar, the bottom bar does not follow the user through the entire site. This could either suggest that if the user made it this far, they might still need an extra push to accept the argument, or simply that an outline like this is common in web design and hence a relevant element to include in a credible website.

Visually, the final frame has the simplest design. The iceberg is no longer in the frame and the background is simply dark blue, resembling the bottom of the ocean. The screen is dominated by textual elements, starting with a two-line, bold summary argument at the top. As the first, biggest line on the screen, it reads: "You won't see eye disease coming, but your local optometrist will." This repeats and summarises the main argument covered on several occasions earlier on the page. The tone is direct and argumentative, but not dramatic or emotional like in some of the paragraphs presented in the previous chapter. The final argument and expected action are further emphasised by an arrow, similar to the ones guiding navigation on the site. Unlike the ones earlier on the site, the arrow is not clickable, but instead points directly at a box below.

The box, depicted in Figure 6.15 below, is clear white and stands out against the dark background. The colour scheme follows the brand pattern of white, dark blue and light teal. The box mainly consists of textual elements, including a search box and a button, in the same teal blue shade as each "Book an eye test" button on the site. Underneath the box, there are further textual elements in a smaller font, with the first in white and the second in the light teal that has so far only been used for CTA buttons. The text reads: "With over 2200 experts listed, EyeHealth1st is Australia's biggest optometry booking platform". Underneath, a link in teal blue guides the user to "Learn more about EyeHealth1st". The brand and its connection to the calls to action throughout the site is subtly promoted through the choice of colour.

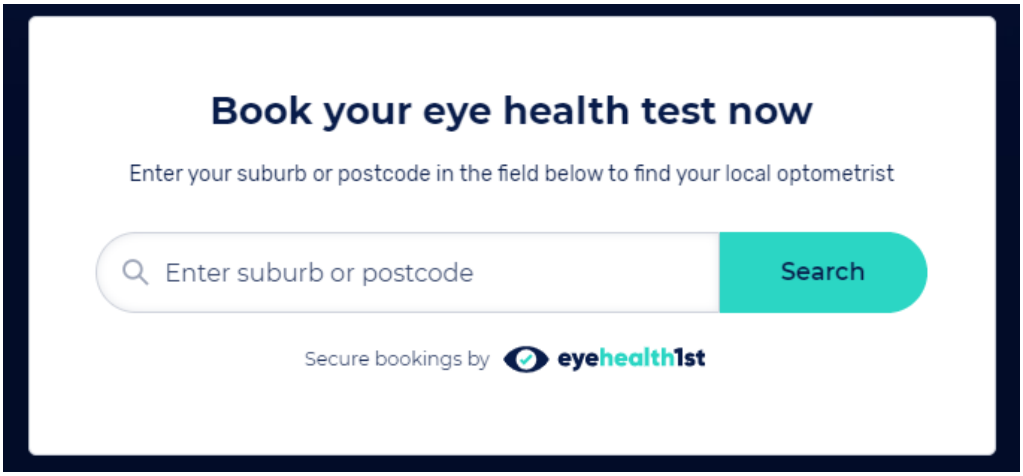

Figure 6.15: Site details: booking form

The title in the box on the site reads “Book your eye health test now”, repeating the call to action that has been presented throughout the site, but now finally providing the concrete tools for doing so. The subtitle reads “Enter your suburb or postcode in the field below to find your local optometrist” and is followed by a search bar prompting the user to “Enter suburb or postcode” and a brand-coloured button that reads “Search”. A line underneath reads “Secure bookings by eyehealh1st”, the last word represented by the brand logo that was introduced earlier in the chapter. The tone of voice across the screen is imperative, clearly built to prompt action as the final step of the page, and simultaneously, the argument. Each phrase starts with a clear imperative verb, like “Book”, “Enter”, “Search”, strengthening the feeling that the argument has been clearly communicated in the earlier elements of the site, and now all that is left for the user to do is to accept or reject the argument and take action.

6.4 Multimodal entity and argumentative structure

After presenting and analysing the individual modes and elements of the site, this chapter will look at the website as a whole, a multimodal interplay of all of its elements. Before moving further with the analysis, it is important to note that from this point forward, the order of the screens presented linearly in the previous chapter is no longer significant; instead, the data is now viewed as an entity. While it is considerably safe to assume that most site visitors will still consume the site roughly in the presented, linear order, the analysis at hand highlights the nonlinear nature of the website space and as such, considers the possibility of some back and forth as well as skipping some parts of the site. This is a characteristic that is typical to nonlinear web argumentation (Degano, 2013) and websites in general (cf. Miles, 2000; Bolaños Medina, 2008) and necessitates the breakdown of the traditionally linear argumentative structure.

Through the analysis in the previous chapters, it has already been made evident that the combination of verbal, visual and hypertextual elements and their interaction within and between one another play a fundamental role in creating the argument. While each mode contributes to the entity in its own right, it is primarily their interaction that makes the argument clear and powerful. The effect is clear both from a structural, argumentative point of view, and as a secondary effect of appealing to the user's emotions through mental suggestions aided by the imagery.

To complete the analysis, the multimodal elements contributing to the argument will be first roughly categorised from two perspectives: those building the metaphor and those building the argument itself. Finally, all the elements presented will be analysed through the model of website argumentative structure, adapted on the basis of Degano's (2013) work. Through the structural analysis, the linearity of the site content, the role of multimodality and the user's agency in the argumentative process will be reflected on.

The multimodal argumentative structure of the site relies heavily on the metaphor of *the tip of the iceberg*, via the conceptual metaphor that "eye is an iceberg", hence, the 'eyesberg'. This directs the discourse and the way the argument is communicated through choices in language, site organisation, visuals and even choices of colour scheme. The impact of the metaphor relies heavily on the multimodality of the site, with one mode supporting another in communicating the message. The power of the multimodal metaphor is based on cognitive knowledge of the verbal metaphor. The verbal metaphor is so embedded into the English language that it cognitively translates to the extent that the site creators feel comfortable with creating complex a multimodal representation of the metaphor and replacing the key element of the metaphor with another, one that seemingly has nothing to do with the original. As discussed in Chapter 4.1, the eye and the iceberg represent the two metaphorical domains used to draw inferences both visually and verbally and direct the discourse. In this instance, the source domain is the concept of the iceberg and its verbal representation of "the tip of the iceberg", a metaphorical idiom that is used to refer to something that seems like one thing on the surface, but might actually be something else entirely, referring to how the bulk of an iceberg usually hides beneath the surface, out of plain sight. The visual context is built fully to represent an iceberg in its natural surroundings, but the tip of the iceberg, the visible part, has been replaced by the external surface of a human eye. Much like the submergent part of the iceberg, many eye diseases hide underneath the heathy looking external part of the eye. Through supporting the creative with

multimodal visuals and verbally relevant copywriting, the complexity of the argument starts to unravel.

Table 1 below presents a summary of the multimodal elements of the site that contribute to building the metaphorical level of the argument.

Table 1: Multimodal elements contributing to the iceberg metaphor

Level of mode	Examples of use
Word choices	• "Look deeper" • "There's a lot you don't see" • "Sink your eyesight"
Visual choices	• Visual structure as iceberg at the top with few details • Placement of disease information "under the surface"
Hypertext	• Site structure as scroll-down • Links and arrows to "go deeper"

The linguistic choices throughout the site play a significant role in supporting the metaphorical value. In many instances, the verbal copy refers to both the source (the iceberg) as well as the target (the eye) of the metaphor. The effect begins on the first screen of the site that only contains two main textual elements. "Look deeper", "There's a lot you don't see", included in the titles on the site as well as the headline of the website in the browser, create a linguistic reference to the metaphor but simultaneously function as site navigation elements, suggesting there is more content to come. Combined with the visual of the 'eyesberg', the chosen verbs referring to eyesight create an additional metaphorical level of meaning. While both the metaphorical and rational level of the argument are already made fairly clear at this point, there are far fewer calls to action on this level, proposing a linear outline through scrolling or clicking down to the next part of the page. Outside of the metaphor, the branding and calls to action are present throughout the site in the top navigation bar, but as clearly separate elements from the figurative level. The hypertextual elements, such as site navigation and links, support the metaphor by guiding the user to "look beneath the surface", both metaphorically and functionally on the site. Similarly, the metaphorical concept is supported by visually placing the rationale for the argument, namely the details about the specific diseases and symptoms that might be hiding underneath the healthy looking exterior, "under the surface". From a metaphorically linear point of view, placing the booking form at the very end, underneath the surface and below the bottom of the iceberg, could be seen as suggesting that as the final resort at the depths of the disease. In this

instance, the maintenance of the argumentative structure is placed before the metaphorical value, perhaps suggesting that the metaphor has made its point as the argument in the first couple of screens.

Through the visual, linguistic and interactive elements (referred to as 'hypertext' in the analysis), a multimodal metaphor is built with a strong cognitive connection to the argument of the site. The metaphor gives additional value and emotional power to an otherwise primarily rational argument (as being 'rational' was defined as one of the key characteristics of argumentation by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2003)). As discussed in Chapter 4.1, multimodal metaphors are very commonly used in advertising and marketing communications in similar functions, as their value in strengthening the message is clear. While the same argument could simply be made without any type of reference to the iceberg, it can be argued that this would weaken the argumentative value and efficiency of the message, making it simply a statement of facts. In this sense, the findings of the present study support the idea of visual and specifically multimodal arguments as opposed to simply rational and verbal ones (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2003). Much like multimodality would not have the same effect without each of its parts (Tseronis, 2018), the multimodal argument in the present data needs the metaphorical value as much as the other elements to have the full effect. The finding is similar to those of Peréz-Sobrino (2016) and Rocci et al (2018), who emphasise the role of multimodal metaphors in marketing messaging.

From the multimodal perspective, it is notable that the imagery used in the disease microsites plays no part in building the metaphor and has little relevance to it. The emotionally provocative images are simply used to emphasise the rational argument at a later stage of the argument, which will be analysed in the following table.

In Table 2, the multimodal elements that contribute specifically to building the argument are presented within the same categorisation as the elements in Table 1. The elements are presented as linguistic or visual choices that are can be utilised to build a stronger narrative for an argument. Elements like this include choices of verbs or their modality, content of the language, contents of chosen images of visuals, or elements of site structure.

Table 2: Multimodal elements contributing to building the argument

Level of mode	Examples of use
Linguistic choices	• Imperative word use • Changes in tone of voice • Use of data to support claims
Visual choices	• Iceberg and site structure (see above table) • Emotionally influential imagery in disease microsites
Hypertext	• Site structure support: links, navigation bar, site meta-titles, CTA buttons

In this breakdown, the focus is on elements that build the argumentative narrative. Starting from verbal choices, the tone of voice across the site is imperative, perhaps in an effort to sound authoritative. Elements of site navigation – that in internet vernacular are typically in an imperative tone – are short and imperative: "Look deeper", "Scroll down", "Book an eye test". Similarly, each microsite ends in an imperative "Talk to an optometrist today", "Book an eye appointment today" and a clear call to action button to "Book an eye test". Through these choices, it is made very clear that the ultimate goal of the argument is to get the user to take action. The use of words like "now" and "today" at the end of imperative sentences creates a sense of urgency (Swain, Hanna and Abendroth, 2006); a tactic commonly used in marketing writing to encourage prompt action.

Between the tip of the iceberg and the more argumentative level with the microsites, there is a clear change in tone of voice. As demonstrated in the earlier chapters, the microsites present the harsh truths by using words like "catastrophic" and "disastrous" to describe the potential impact of the diseases. Additionally, some of the paragraphs rely on data to support the cause, providing statistics like "One in seven Australians over 50" or "1 in 4 diabetics" to support the claim. For an emotional impact, imagery evoking an emotional response to losing sight of loved ones is presented alongside the facts.

While the multimodal metaphor already works as an initiation to the argument, the more argumentative level of multimodal elements brings a more serious tone to the content of the site. Between Tables 1 and 2, the data being analysed looks almost as if collected from a different source. It is clear that the metaphor and the argumentative stage are built of different elements to function as different parts of the argument, to serve a different purpose.

Still, while serving a purpose in their own right, the multimodal elements all contribute to the argumentative structure. In the following analysis, the elements are reviewed from the perspective of how they contribute to the argumentative structure. In reviewing the structure, it is made evident that elements from Tables 1 and 2 often work together to form each part of the argument, and the metaphorical elements and the argumentative elements should not be seen as individual parts of the structure but rather a collaborative, multimodal entity.

Although the structure of the site allows the user to navigate the argument in a nonlinear order and skips steps that are traditional to the argumentative structure, there are several elements built into the site that support traditional linearity and narrativity of the argument. In the present study, the argumentative structure of the site is categorised based on an adaptation of Degano's (2013) model, presented at more length in Chapters 3 and 5. To recap, the structure consists of 3+1 elements:

1. Stating the campaign's aim,
2. Presenting the support for the argument,
3. Call to action,

+ Establishing the brand's legitimacy.

The above elements are all clearly present in the content of the site, presented in a number of different modes and elements. Table 3 below presents the elements analysed in Chapters 6.1-6.3 and in Tables 1 and 2 above, roughly categorised into each of the stages. The multimodality of each element, as reviewed in the previous chapters, is henceforth implicit and the elements are no longer analysed at depth by individual element.

Table 3: Multimodal elements contributing to the argumentative structure

Stage of argumentation	Elements of the site
1. Presenting the campaign's aim	• The iceberg metaphor (visual and verbal) • "There's a lot of you can't see", "Look deeper", and similar expressions • Links and prompts to read on
2. Presenting the support for the argument	• Microsites presenting a variety of eye disease through visual and verbal means

3. Call to action	• Clear CTA buttons throughout the site, branded with colour and visually separate from the rest of the content • Booking form at the end of the site • "Book your appointment", "Consult your doctor", similar references in body text
+ Establishing the brand's legitimacy	• Logos • Links to learn more about the brand behind the initiative • Clear visual branding throughout the site

The first step in the model is **presenting the campaigns aim**. If the aim is seen as equivalent to the action to be taken on the basis of the argumentative act, the aim would be for the user to book an eye appointment, and hence be presented in the third step of the structure. On a more general level, the purpose of the campaign, as in the argument it aims to make *in order to* prompt the action, was established in the beginning of the analysis as *Some severe eye diseases do not present themselves in obvious symptoms before it is too late to treat them, but an eye health professional can spot them early*. To simplify even further, it could be narrowed down to just the first clause; *Some severe eye diseases do not present themselves in obvious symptoms before it is too late to treat them.* While the concrete aim of the campaign is to prompt action to prevent eye damage, it could be seen as an equally important aim to provide information to the user, through which the action will ideally be taken. It could also be argued that on this specific site, booking the appointment through the form is the sales goal (getting the visitor to use the service provided) and prompting the action in general, be it through this particular site or another means, is the social marketing goal.

Through this definition, most of the elements contributing to presenting the aim correspond to the metaphorical elements presented in Table 1. In this sense, it could be argued that the metaphorical level of the argument is largely responsible for catching the user's attention for the argument. It corresponds to the 'Interest' step in the AIDA model of marketing presented in Chapter 2.1, with the first step of 'Awareness' being implied or prompted by previous campaign elements, much like the opening stage in van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2003) model.

The next step in the structure is **presenting the support for the argument.** Similarly to step 1, the majority of the elements contributing to step 2 are among those presented in Table 2 as parts of the argument. This contains a large majority of the elements on the second screen of the site, such as the microsites presenting the factual written and emotional visual claims to support the argument. As was

noted in the analysis, there are distinctively more visual modes in the first screen, whereas the second screen relies more heavily on verbal elements.

Unlike steps 1 and 2, elements contributing to step 3, **call to action**, are sprinkled across the site. The CTA button is always present at the top of the page, included in each microsite and in many of their descriptions ("Book an appointment today", "Consult your optometrist today", etc) as well as very prominently present as a search box at the bottom of the page, concluding the argument.

On first look, the three steps roughly correspond to the three frames of the website, suggesting that there is a level of linearity in the content of the site. Despite the untraditional linear outline of the hypermedia, people are used to consuming content in a linear order, so it is instinctive to build the content of a site in that order, while using the hyperactive elements as tools to open up opportunities for nonlinear consumption. The fact that the website is primarily built as a "scroll-through" instead of a "click-through" (Mcintyre et al., 2016) facilitates the flow of the narrative in a linear order, while also enabling the traditional argumentative structure.

Looking at the linearity and structure of the argument in Table 3 in comparison to the website's linear order presented in the previous chapters, it would seem that stages 1 (*presenting the aim*) and 2 (*supporting the argument*) appear in a fairly linear order, on screens 1 and 2 respectively. Elements contributing to stage 3 (*call to action*) are however present at all stages of the site, breaking down the traditional linearity of the site content, while reinforcing the campaign's clear intention to prompt action. The outline presents almost as if the user is continuously given the option to skip the process of argumentation altogether and move straight to accepting the premise and taking action. In terms of agency in the argumentative act, the user is practically left with the choice to counter-argue only by leaving the website or performing the desired action, making it more of a "quasi-discussion" (van Eemeren, 2010) than a dialogue. The user journey supports the user's agency in choosing whether they would like to continue to learn more about the argument, accept it as presented or reject it by leaving the site. In each step of the website, the user is given the choice to request more information by choosing another block of information to read or clicking to book an appointment, but their voice or particular concerns in the argumentative discourse are not heard; this has all been assumed by the developer or content writer of the website. Being presented with a plethora of options and knowing all the steps along the way through the navigation bar gives the user a sense of being in control of the argumentative process. This fades the feeling of "quasi-discussion", although in reality the argumentation remains one-sided.

The apparent linearity of the site is also visibly present in site navigation, with a constant progress bar with a downwards arrow on the left-hand side. As discussed in earlier analysis, a progress bar like this not only encourages linear navigation, similarly to prompts to "Scroll down" and "Look deeper", but also increases the chance of process completion, in this case making it to the end of the site to view the booking form and complete the action. While the progress bar could appear to be counterproductive next to all the CTA buttons sprinkled across the site and encouraging skipping through content, it will provide a sense of completion even when skipping half of the site content, a feeling leaving the site mid-argument will not provide.

In terms of visuals, the same colour scheme is present throughout the site. From the colour of the sky to the bottom of the ocean, only shades of white and blue – traditionally "cold" colours – are used. The brand elements are clearly distinguished with a different palette all the while staying in the same general colour scheme: each call to action button throughout the site is distinctively in the same teal shade as in the logo, forging a mental connection to the brand somewhat unconsciously without ever verbally mentioning it in the argumentative process. This kind of subtle branding is common in marketing and provenly efficient (Singh, 2006), all the while not pushing the brand presence before the (seemingly) primary goal. In the application of Degano's (2013) theory, these elements form an important part of the argumentative process as the additional moves to **establish the brand's legitimacy**. While it might not be the most obvious part of building the argument, getting the reader to trust the brand through these simple steps will also make them more likely to trust the factual evidence presented to support the argument and through that, take the final action. Through gaining the user's trust in the brand and simultaneously strengthening the argument they are presenting, the company is more likely to get the user to buy the service from them and not a competitor. The bottom navigation bar on the site serves a similar function, with links to find out more about the company, the site and the initiative, as well as links to social media profiles for the Web 2.0 inclined.

As a rough generalisation, it could be summarised that steps 1 (*presenting the aim*) and some elements of step 2 (*presenting the support*) are more significant parts of the metaphorical argument, whereas steps 3 (*call to action*) and +1 (*brand legitimacy*) make no reference to the metaphor, but are rather built into the narrative as follow-up to the metaphorical "introduction". It could be concluded that the metaphor provides value in terms of initial interest and awareness, a nudge even, but as a standalone unit it would be left weak. Using a more serious tone and providing clear prompts to act seems like a crucial part of the final steps of delivering the message. This finding roughly corresponds to

Cugelman, Thelwall and Daves's (2008) findings about persuasive website technology, where they suggest that implementing smaller calls to action to ease the user into the main action towards the end might be an efficient persuasive technique. While in this instance, the call to action remains the same throughout the site and is present at all stages, the emphasis that is put on it clearly increases in each screen. The finding that a large majority of the metaphorical value is built through the first steps and the visual landscape of the campaign also corresponds to Pérez-Sobrino's (2016) large corpus-based finding, in which she illustrated that among the 210 advertisements analysed, the figurative value of an ad more commonly falls on the visual mode, whereas the product value is more strongly communicated via verbal means.

Through the analysis, it has been established that the multimodal elements, those rhetorical, visual and metaphorical, all play a part in contributing to the argumentative process. Anything from details as simple as colour choices to the variety of elements contributing to the metaphorical support for the argument have value in terms of the big picture. While the site structure as "scroll-down" is built into a linear narrative, many of the hypertextual elements provide opportunities for the user to navigate their own experience and control their role in the argumentative process. The elements all fit into the argumentative structure that was established for the analysis, but not a single part of the argument would have the same value without the interplay of the multimodal elements. Stripping down any of the elements or changing minor things could shift the narrative to a different direction, proving the value of all modalities in building the argument. The role of the metaphor in the seemingly rational argumentative process is also evident, contributing significantly to the structure and cohesion of the argument.

The next chapter will summarise the findings in relation to the research questions.

7 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore and characterise multimodal argumentation in the context of the social marketing campaign website "Look deeper". The campaign message promoting eye health was communicated through a metaphor ceoncept, the role and characteristics of which were also an important element in structuring the analysis. The analysis included a thorough multimodal discourse analysis of the elements contributing to the argument, reflecting on their visual, lexical and hypertextual value, but most importantly on their multimodal interplay in communicating the argument. The elements were reflected against an adaptation of Degano's (2013) model of website argumentation to illustrate their multimodal and nonlinear nature. Based on Tseronis (2018), the aim of the analysis was to explore the value of the multimodal nature and interplay of the elements in delivering the argumentative message in a website marketing context.

The study aimed to answer the following three research questions:

1) What are the features and characteristics of the multimodal elements used to build arguments in the website presented and how does their interplay contribute to the discourse?
2) How does the metaphorical concept enable multimodal argumentative discourse?
3) How is the argumentative structure realised in the nonlinear, hypertextual and multimodal website space?

Additionally, the study aimed to further explore the possibility of the existence of a multimodal argument as a complex structure over simply visual or verbal arguments. Finally, it aimed to understand the potential of multimodal argumentation for online marketing discourse.

To address the first research question, the features and characteristics of the elements were carefully described and analysed using methods of multimodal discourse analysis. Each element of the site was presented visually and verbally for a thorough exploration of their features. The site consists of elements that are primarily lexical, visual or hypertextual in nature; often a combination of two or even three of the categories. This is one of the key findings of the study, proving the value of multimodality. For example, in terms of purely verbal elements, the impact is not only defined by the choice of words, but also emphasised by the chosen font, punctuation, or colour palette. The impact of font colour is particularly clear in the cases where all calls to action to book an appointment are

subtly branded with the same colours used only in the brand logo, nowhere else in the site. The brand is present everywhere on the site in the form of logos and colours, and menu bars offer further opportunities to confirm its credibility, strengthening the argument, although it is never the main element. Similarly, the colour scheme impacts the overall feeling and structure of the site, with darker colours becoming more prominent in the site following the linear order of the argument. In terms of multimodality, many textual and visual elements are simultaneously elements of site navigation, like links or prompts.

The metaphorical backbone of the website relies heavily on visuals and the linearity of the site, while the rational claims are largely supported by verbal elements and lexical choices. The stylistic choices of language across the site are direct and argumentative in nature; blunt claims, strong and occasionally even hyperbolic choices of adjectives and verbs, repetitive use of the imperative form of verbs to encourage action. Throughout the site, words with double meaning are used to refer both to the iceberg metaphor as well as the topic at hand. Despite the metaphorical use of language, the tone is serious and authoritative throughout the site. Direct calls to action to book an appointment are present everywhere on the site, including each informative microsite and the top bar that is always present in the view. Emotionally influential imagery is used alongside factual claims to support the argument.

When reflected against the argumentative structure, the first stages of the argument are communicated more visually and the support for the argument relies more heavily on textual elements. Calls to action and brand credibility, the final and additional step in the structure, are communicated multimodally, combining visual, verbal and hypertextual elements into one. Overall, each stage of the argument is built up of vastly multimodal elements and most of all, it is their interplay that is the main contributor to building a strong argument, echoing Tseronis's (2018) view of multimodal argumentation. While each element could be characterised to some detail in the analysis, it would have been counterproductive to try to categorise each element on a more granular level, and instead the site was looked at as a multimodal entity.

The narrative theme of the campaign was largely built around a metaphorical 'eyesberg' depicting the invisible dangers of eye disease. The second research question focussed on the features that contribute to building the metaphor and through that, the argument itself. Due to the multimodal nature of the campaign as addressed in response to Question 1, the elements contributing to the metaphor are equally varied in modality. Most notably, the metaphor is visible in the visual frame of

the ‘eyesberg’ that dominates the entire structure of the website. It provides linearity, structure and a dramatic narrative for the site by guiding the argumentative process, starting at the light tone of voice at the tip of the iceberg and moving on to more serious, factual argumentation towards the end of the argument. The colour palette of the entire site is based on the metaphor, visible in the various tones of blue and white. In addition to the visuals and site structure, the metaphor is present in lexical choices across the site, from lighter references that could almost be considered puns, to more dramatic references to decimating eyesight in otherwise direct and informative claims. Hypertextual elements of site navigation also make reference to the metaphor with prompts to “look deeper”. Although the visual frame of the metaphor continues through the entire site, the metaphorical value of the argument, both in terms of lexical choices and visual references, is more prominent in the first half of the website, which could be considered the critical stages for a successful argumentative process. Towards the ‘call to action’ and brand legitimacy stages, the finishing touches of the argumentative process, the metaphor is hardly present. In this sense, the metaphor provides visual structure and enables initial interest and intrigue into the argument but is less relevant in the factual argumentative stage itself.

The final research question addressed the capabilities of the nonlinear, interactive and multimodal computer-mediated space in enabling the argumentative process. Throughout the analysis, the role of the environment was evident in the argumentative process. The “scroll-down” structure of the site provides a linearity that a more traditional, link-based website outline would not provide. This way, the website guides the linear process, but also provides the user a chance to control the continuity and direction of the discussion though links and prompts, particularly repetitive call to action buttons throughout the site and hypertextual elements of site navigation. The environment enables the metaphorical structure of the argument and simultaneously allows the user to choose the extent to which they would like to continue the process, providing a sense of control over the argumentative process. The possibility to end the argument is constantly present, either by leaving the site or clicking to book an appointment. Further information about the credibility of the argument is just a couple of clicks away. The user can also choose exactly how much information they would like to get by clicking on the microsite prompts that interest them. In this sense, the contents of the site can be consumed in the order the user dictates, not vice versa. Although the argument is presented in a relatively linear order, the web environment and its hyperactive functions enable a different order of consumption. Although the user is not able to actively participate in the discussion, the environment mimics a two-sided argument by giving this kind of power to the user. These findings also contribute

to the notion of Miles (2000), Kok (2004) and other researchers of hypertextuality that the actual functions of hypertextual discourse are in determined pragmatically.

In the analysis, the multimodal elements were reflected against an adaptation of Chiara Degano's (2013) breakdown into "argumentative moves" in website argumentation, created based on van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2003) pragma-dialectical structure of argumentation. The categorisation was used to reflect on the role of each mode and functionality of the site in creating the argumentative rhetoric.

Through a qualitative look into the multimodal elements that build the argument in the campaign website *lookdeeper.com.au*, the study aimed to contribute to Tseronis' (2018) theory that prioritises multimodality over individual functions of modes in building arguments. The analysis showed that while each element has some standalone value, it is their interplay and entity that creates a cohesive argumentative experience. Without the metaphor, the argumentative structure would fall flat. Without the visuals, the metaphor would not translate as clearly. Without the lexical references to the metaphor, the argument's connection to the metaphor would be unclear. Without the visuals that evoke emotion, the argument might not have as much influential power. With this in mind, the following chapter will discuss potential research perspectives going forward.

In previous research (Forceville, 2010; Pérez-Sobrino, 2016; Rocci et al., 2018), the use of multimodal tropes has been shown to be particularly impactful in marketing communication. The contextual framework for the present study was in website communication and social marketing, where the clear goal of the marketing activity is to provoke positive or beneficial action. The results of this study have illustrated some ways in which awareness of multimodal argumentation theory can provide insights for those working in creating marketing communications. In addition, it has further highlighted the value of multimodal tropes in building an argumentative website rhetoric. The present study also contributes to the earlier findings in which the role of visuals has been highlighted or even prioritised in creating effective marketing communications.

8 Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the ways argumentative discourse can be built multimodally in a website environment. This chapter will discuss the findings in a larger context, including its limitations, potential applications and implications for further research.

The results of the present study have contributed to the research of multimodal argumentation in the CMC context by highlighting the role and value of multimodal discourse and strategic planning based on the requirements of the linear or nonlinear environment. From the perspective of argumentation, while verbal means are considered the most traditional and efficient, the study showed that the use of other modes can add value to the process of argumentation. Additionally, the results showed that tailoring the message and the argumentative process according to the needs of both the sender and the receiver of the message requires extra careful consideration in one-sided marketing communications environments like websites. The hypertextual characteristics of the web environment enable a sense of agency for the receiver of the message – the website user – in argumentative environments where they otherwise might not have an active role.

For further studies in argumentation, the possibilities of different levels of linearity in the web environment provide interesting opportunities. The linearity of the data should be addressed as one of the limitations the present study. Varied degrees of nonlinearity, facilitated by the elements of the hypermedia, were defined as one of the defining characteristics of the website environment. The website can be nonlinear in its essence, but large parts of the website analysed in the present study had clearly been built to support a linear narrative, while providing the user opportunities to "break" the traditional narrative by skipping steps or jumping ahead. While it can be assumed that not all users run through the entire site in the linear order, it is also very likely that the structure of the "scroll-down" site forces them to follow the linear order, at least to an extent. Due to this, it should be claimed that the data of this study is nonlinear only to a limited extent, and there is opportunity for further research on multimodal argumentation in a less structured or controlled environment. It was found that while the multimodal environment facilitates breaking down the traditional argumentative structure, the content order of the site follows the linear order of the stages of argumentation quite closely, with the main exception being the final step of "call to action", which is present at all stages of the site. This is a reflection of the primary goal of the campaign, prompting action, as well as advances of persuasive technology and hypertextuality. Ultimately, the goal of the entire

argumentative process is clear, and the user is constantly provided an opportunity to skip the process altogether. In this sense, the argumentative process is not necessarily built with 'critical discussion' (van Eemeren, 2013) in mind; it is only put in place to support the final goal. For further research about a more two-sided critical discussion in the online environment, the media of Web 2.0, such as social media platforms, provide interesting opportunities. While the amount of content is limited in the social media space and the process of argumentation should, logically, take place in a smaller space, the modern applications of social media widgets and comment boxes on websites could provide an interesting crossroads of content and community.

Another limitation of the research is a natural result of the type of analysis conducted. While looking at discourse analysis and particularly multimodality, it is important to keep in mind that communication and language is inherently ambiguous in the sense that people from different cultures might interpret the significance of language and other signs differently. There might be variability between different cultures, but also different individuals. In Kress's (2010: 8) words: "-- in theorizing and writing about communication, I can talk with some confidence about the few cultures that I know reasonably well." In this sense, a qualitative discourse analysis can only be realised through the eyes of the one conducting it, and no generalisations can be made. For example, although there might be a general consensus about how colours are interpreted, there are differences between viewers in different cultures or demographics (cf. Singh, 2006). To use an example in this study, the colour scheme and thematic used in the visual presentation might translate one way to a Northern European than it would to an Australian in the target group. Although the metaphor that the visual translates is fairly clear, a Northern European might see the icy, cold, snowy surroundings as more soothing, as typical characteristics of home, compared to an Australian who might view them as chilling and foreign compared to their everyday climate. Based on general knowledge about the target culture and language, only assumptions can be made about the way the message was built to be interpreted. Additionally, with a clear presentation of data, this does not take away from the analysis of the multimodal tools at use, which are the focus of this study. Being a qualitative study with no emphasis on numerical data or the actual performance of the campaign, the aim of the study was not to evaluate if the message was received and acted upon, but rather evaluate the means in which it was attempted. Whether the analysis of the means was conducted "correctly" by someone outside of the direct target group – and hence someone who the targeted communication was not intended for – shall remain open for discussion. Echoing Machin and Mayr (2012: 10), it is possible to use methods of discourse analysis to describe and analyse the resources and their potential, but it is not possible to completely accurately interpret the intention of the authors nor the understanding of the intended audience. In the

case of a marketing campaign, it is admittedly easier to come to conclusions about the intentions of the authors, but there might very well be underlying intentions or nuances that are not interpreted 'correctly' in analysing the data.

Another aspect that is worth discussing is the presentation of data and results in a study that is focussed on demonstrating the value of multimodality. Despite Tseronis' (2018) criticism about how multimodal research data should ideally be described, representing data in writing remains the most efficient and descriptive way of analysing multimodal content, as argued by Forceville (2010: 14). While future researchers will hopefully be able to append data in their research in video, audio or other sensory form, current research practices rely on verbal means to transcribe and describe what cannot be attached to a research report. However, by considering each modality an equally relevant contribution to the argumentative act and process and by placing emphasis on their interplay instead of prioritising language over other forms, progress in the modes of analysis will be able to catch up to progress in modes of data. For future research on multimodal argumentation, there is also a clear need for more defined concepts and methodology to apply for a more structured view.

In the context of eye health, even if the campaign is planned for early intervention, it worth noting that such a visual campaign could be considered limited in terms of accessibility – not everyone in the intended audience might be able to view colours or visual content in the intended way. Similarly, analysing the colours and visual elements of the campaign could even be considered counterintuitive. In future research around the topic, it would be interesting and inclusive to see varied modalities utilised in the presentation of data and analysis as well. The intersection of visual impairment and multimodality seems like the perfect opportunity to explore more accessible options for research.

Looking at the analysis from the perspective of marketing, the value of multimodality is evident. As the content we consume becomes more and more visual and interactive, there is a clear need for research on the way content like this is created and consumed. Understanding the role of the visual in argumentation becomes more and more important as visually dominant platforms become more prominent and are increasingly used as platforms for influence. For instance, there could be interesting opportunities for research on influence and argumentation within the content of popular microvideo platforms like Instagram and TikTok, especially among the youth that has grown up on these platforms.

The marketing perspective in the data of this study was not purely social, and there was a clear commercial interest behind the initiative. While the analysis was not concerned with the commercial element of the campaign and focused on the socially beneficial side that promoted better health, there is potential for further research on campaigns that are built by NGOs or other not-for-profits for purely social marketing reasons. Degano's (2013) study that inspired the framework for the present study is such an example, and along with the findings presented in the present study, could provide further inspiration for research on the topic.

In the end, the aim of the present study was not to provide a new theory or revelation in the field of multimodal argumentation. As qualitative research, the main aim of the study was to characterise the multimodal ways in which arguments can be communicated in the marketing website environment. From this perspective, the study provided many examples of multimodal means of designing influential discourse and has hopefully contributed to the understanding of the multimodal web of influence. The study has contributed to Tseronis' (2018) existing theory and opened up many new potential avenues for further research on the topic.

To revisit to Forceville's (2010: 43) words that were quoted in the introduction of this paper: "A central question in the analysis of multimodal discourse is -- how the overall effect is more than the sum of the parts." The primary aim of the present study was to build upon this claim and provide a qualitative analysis of data from the real word that illustrates how the multimodal impact can, indeed, be more than the sum of its parts. A thorough analysis of the metaphorical and multimodal features of the elements in the *Look deeper* campaign for eye health shows that when it comes to multimodal analysis, what can be seen above the surface is, in fact, just the tip of the iceberg.

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Appendix 1


eyehealth1st
Book an eye test
Eye disease.
There's a lot you don't see.
Scroll down
Home
Many eye diseases have no early symptoms. If not detected in time, they can lead to permanent blindness. For a deeper look into your eye health, scroll down and book with your local optometrist.
Glaucoma
Cataracts
Diabetic retinopathy
Press here to see the risk
Age-related macular degeneration
Uncorrected refractive error
You won't see eye disease coming, but your local optometrist will.
Book your eye health test now
Enter your suburb or postcode in the field below to find your local optometrist
Enter suburb or postcode
Search
Secure bookings by eyehealth1st
With over 2200 experts listed, EyeHealth1st is Australia's biggest optometry booking platform.
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