

## Unleashing Argumentation in Netflix's Docudramas: Illocutionary Pluralism and Multimodal Rhetoric in the Trailer for *Queen Cleopatra* (2023)

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**Abstract:** Trailers for movies are generally considered aesthetic independent multimodal fragmented discourse. Since one of the key features of trailers for docudramas is to promote arguments in order to propagate the importance and worthiness of documentaries to be watched, trailers rely heavily on limited fragmented compositions and implicitness to arouse the viewer's curiosity. This study aims to provide an enthymematic interpretation of the trailer for Netflix's brand-new docudrama *Queen Cleopatra*, which has resulted in immense controversy in Egypt since its release in April 2023. Thus, the study investigates how the enthymematic property of the selected trailer is constructed through the illocutionary pluralism in the characters' argumentative polylogues and presented through the interplay of verbal-visual semiotic resources such as montage techniques, music, moving images, colors, etc. This study adopts Wildfeuer and Pollaroli's (2017) theoretical framework of multimodal argumentation in movie trailers supported by Lewiński's (2021) illocutionary pluralism in argumentative polylogues. The framework foregrounds the importance of the surrounding context (Pragma-Dialectics) in multimodal rhetoric and dwells upon two levels: logic of film discourse interpretation and argumentative reconstruction of the movie trailer. Findings have revealed that the interplay of cross-modal devices and speech acts stimulates spectators to form hypotheses and draw inferences on the cinematic discourse they are subsequently invited to watch and thus to retrieve arguments in support of the claim that the advertised documentary is worth watching.

**Keywords:** Docudrama, multimodal argumentation, Netflix, Queen Cleopatra, semiotic resources, speech acts, trailers.

Docudramas are dramatic narratives of real and historical events. It has been argued that Netflix invests in docudrama due to the growing popularity of the genre and Netflix's interest in documentary films and series. Documentary filmmakers construct their films, and are responsible for making various decisions about the nature of the story being told, the intended audience, and the purpose for which the documentary is made. Here comes the argumentative feature of documentary trailers. Filmmakers tempt Netflix subscribers to watch the documentary by creating a trailer as an audiovisual multimodal argument, by utilizing montage strategies, visual elements and semiotics along with the verbal messages, embedded in narration, dialogues or polylogues in

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order to stimulate the subscribers' curiosity to watch the documentary (Iordache et al., 2022; Terrone, 2020).

The analysis of multimodal rhetoric in trailers is a challenging research area. A method for reconstructing and analyzing multimodal arguments in the trailer for *Queen Cleopatra* docudrama is used in this paper, combining pragmatics and multimodal argumentation theory and considering them jointly as mutually reinforcing, complementary theories. The idea underlying the empirical investigation in this paper is how the multimodal enthymematic interpretation in the trailer for Netflix's *Queen Cleopatra* docudrama can be cued and inferred. Recent studies (Mittelberg & Hinnell, 2021; Nur Fitria, 2021; Tseng, 2013) have been conducted on the complexity of the interaction of semiotics and film studies. Page (2009) elucidated that film is considered a complex semiotic mode. Like films, trailers rely heavily on the interplay of various semiotic resources. Most importantly, a trailer - unlike films - is a condensed rapid linear multimodal implicit persuasive discourse. Wildfeuer and Pollaroli (2017) have maintained that trailers are "fast cutting and highly complex editing, jumping between lines, space, (...) fragmented composition intended to both entertain and convince viewers to watch the movie at cinema" (p. 191).

Though movie trailers constitute an interesting discourse genre, they have largely been under-researched (Dornaletetxe Ruiz, 2012; Maier, 2011 as cited in Pollaroli, 2014). Driven by the need for developing the path of research on movie trailers as a film genre, this research aims to explore how the enthymematic property of trailers for docudramas is presented through the interplay of verbal-visual semiotic resources such as montage techniques, music, moving images and colors, and how illocutionary pluralism of the characters' polylogues could contribute to reconstructing the argument advanced by the trailer maker. The focus of this paper is to analyze a docudrama trailer as a complex argumentative multimodal composition underscoring the pragmatic dimension in terms of Speech Acts. The researchers have adopted the theoretical framework recently developed by Wildfeuer and Pollaroli's (2017) multimodal argumentation in movie trailers supported by Lewiński's (2021) to make explicit the role of illocutionary pluralism in reconstructing arguments.

This study intends to provide an enthymematic interpretation of the trailer for Netflix's docudrama *Queen Cleopatra*. This trailer was selected as a case study since its release has aroused the interest of Egyptians leading to much controversy. The study purports to answer these questions:

1. In what ways does the interplay of semiotic resources in the trailer for Netflix's *Queen Cleopatra* docudrama (2023) contribute to meaning construction?
2. What multimodal arguments are advanced in the selected trailer?
3. How does the illocutionary pluralism of the characters' polylogues in the selected trailer contribute to reconstructing the argument?

The researchers hypothesize that all communicative acts are multimodal: elements in multimodal texts all work together to create meanings (Clark, 2022). Arguments - statements used to support propositions - are advanced multimodally utilizing an array of visual, verbal, and auditory resources, and such arguments are enhanced by employing rhetorical strategies. We further hypothesize that through speech acts, particularly illocutionary pluralism of speech acts in polylogues, several interlocutors in the trailer could contribute to the reconstruction of the argument(s) advanced by the maker of the trailer.

## Theoretical Foundations

### Movie Trailers: Definition and Characteristics

Kernan (2004) describes trailers as appetizers for coming attractions. Dornaletetxe Ruiz (2007) views trailers as a type of advertising providing the audience with samples of the film to arouse their interest while leaving out other information to encourage them to watch the movie. Dornaletetxe Ruiz (2012) defines a movie trailer as ‘an audiovisual advertisement of an audiovisual product’ (p. 1878), exploring the semantic status of movie trailers; the movie trailer would be the *sign* and the film would be the *object* it is referring to. In conducting an exploratory study on movie trailers, viewing them from a rhetorical and argumentative perspective, Pollaroli (2014) has defined movie trailers as “hybrid audiovisual discourse genres” (p. 1): they combine both the narrative and the advertising nature of the movie and utilize a thoroughly-chosen re-montage of still and moving images, music, voiceover, intertitles, etc. in order to persuade potential spectators to watch a forthcoming movie. They are designed to be shows of other forthcoming shows and can be described as communicative practices employing the same semiotic resources of the communicative practices they are advertising for (Dornaletetxe Ruiz, 2007, 2009; Maier, 2009, 2011 as cited in Pollaroli, 2014). Accordingly, Pollaroli (2014) hypothesizes that movie trailers are argumentative discourses that employ multimodal arguments and multimodal rhetorical patterns to fulfill their promotional goal; these are relevant since they help the spectator infer the arguments in support of the standpoint presented in the trailer.

In exploring the semiotic status of movie trailers, Dornaletetxe Ruiz (2012) displays various formats of trailers and explains the semiotic relation between the movie and the trailer it promotes in each. A “creative trailer” is “autonomous;” that is, originally produced since it does not use footage from the movie. The relation between the sign and the object is metaphoric, allegorical, or analogical. The “clip trailer” utilizes an entire part of the movie; hence, the relation between the sign and the object is metonymic since the part is representing the whole. The “standard trailer” can be divided into theatrical trailers and teasers; the difference between them is temporal: the first lasting for two minutes and a half and the second for one minute and twenty seconds. Both depend on voice-over, graphic art, and grid editing, which means compiling different parts of the film in a fast-paced, dynamic montage. Here the relation between the sign and the object is metonymic. The “making of ” trailer includes footage “behind the scenes” where the relation is meta-metonymic since there is a reference to the process of making the film; extra-diegetic aspects of the film are exploited to add credibility.

Pollaroli (2014) argues that the few scholars who have conducted research on movie trailers (Dornaletetxe Ruiz, 2007, 2009; Dusi, 2002; Kernan, 2004; Maier, 2009, 2011) unanimously agree that trailers have a persuasive function like advertising. Though movie trailers cannot be easily accepted as argumentative discourse by some scholars since they claim that advertising is not argumentative, they can, as a starting point, be viewed as enthymemes: the standpoint often remains implicit and indirect, and potential spectators are required to construct the argument(s) with the help of the overall purpose of the discourse and the surrounding context. It is worth noting that this is in accordance with recent research on multimodal argumentation: arguments are constructed modally utilizing potential semiotic resources, and images are viewed as enthymemes.

Movie trailers are different from summaries of movies; they have a non-chronological structure: shots put together representing a topic or a reality without chronological order (Bateman, 2007; Metz, 1989). Movie trailers are composed of a re-montage of sounds, music, and moving images from the movie they promote, shots and scenes created for the trailer only or original shots

not included in the movie, including information about the actors, the director, the production company, day of release, etc. Maier (2009) argues that spectators “evaluate” the actors, the events, the film company and, consequently, the movie. The structure of a movie trailer is motivated by its promotional function. In movie trailers, the meaning is condensed, and the multimodal sequences may seem incoherent; however, movie trailers invite the audience to form hypotheses on the cinematic discourse they are subsequently invited to watch.

More recently, Wildfeuer and Pollaroli (2017) view movie trailers as ‘multimodal argumentative discourse’ in which cross-modal devices such as montage, music, sound, etc., convey not only the semantic content but also the arguments expressed in the movie. They argue that much information that contributes to the meaning of the movie is not explicitly stated in the trailer and has to be inferred by the viewer based on their knowledge of the world and of the trailer as a genre; furthermore, the standpoints are not directly expressed, but they have to be reconstructed from the intersemiotic interplay and the surrounding context. They further argue that the relatively little work on movie trailers has focused on persuasive strategies. No attempt was previously made to analyze the discourse genre of trailers in terms of ‘enthymematic interpretation’ of arguments, which means examining the audio and visual cues that guide the viewer in making inferences. They propose an integrated method of analysis combining a semantic-pragmatic approach along with an argumentation one, thus allowing for a re-examination of the Aristotelian notion of enthymematic argumentation in relation to movie trailers as audio-visual argumentative discourse.

### **Enthymematic Analysis of Movie Trailers**

An enthymeme, frequently defined as “a syllogism with one of its parts missing” (Smith, 2007, p. 114), has been one of the most widely-discussed and hotly-debated topics in argumentation theory and informal logic. The concept of the enthymeme dates back to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. In Aristotle’s approach to the enthymeme, there is a shift from argumentation theory to logic; arguments found in practice were his point of departure. However, more recent interpretations of the enthymeme differ remarkably from Aristotle’s classical conception. They can accommodate both verbal and visual enthymemes (Braet, 1999; Smith, 2007).

Wildfeuer and Pollaroli (2017) have proposed an integrated framework that aims to provide a more elaborate view of an enthymematic interpretation of movie trailers and their persuasive function. It dwells upon two levels: the semantic-pragmatic level and the argumentation level. The authors illuminate the meaning-making processes viewers follow in order to interpret the audio-visual discourse and delineate the results of this process in terms of endoxical and procedural premises. They maintain that it is only through this integrated approach that it is possible for viewers to fully reconstruct the enthymematic discourse of movie trailers by means of recovering semantic meaning and argumentative structures. The fundamental basis of this combined perspective is abduction and defeasible reasoning. Abduction can be defined as a weak conclusion. The authors take into consideration the close parallels between Aristotle’s enthymematic reasoning and Pierce’s abduction, as proposed by Kraus (2003) and Lanigan (1995); their target is to elucidate how the multimodal analysis of movie trailers can make explicit the processes of movie trailers’ abductive and enthymematic reasoning processes about a trailer’s argumentative structure.

### **Speech Acts and Argumentative Polylogues**

Understanding motives is fundamental for successful communication (Clark, 2022). Asher and Lascarides (2001) define Indirect Speech Acts (ISAs) in terms of the relations between

utterances rather than their own properties: “one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by means of performing another” and, in this way, an ISA carries “two illocutionary forces” with an illocutionary force referring to the meaning intended by the speaker. An utterance is categorized as an ISA if the illocutionary acts predicted by the linguistic form is distinct from the illocutionary act performed by the speaker.

An *Argumentative polylogue* refers to a discussion or a debate that involves multiple participants, each expressing and defending their own point of view on a controversial topic. Lewiński (2014) defines polylogue as a conversation that involves more than two interlocutors. However, typical argumentative polylogues are complex activities in which multiple interlocutors discuss their distinct standpoints across a variety of places (Aakhus & Lewiński, 2017). According to Clark and Carlson (1982), the main feature of polylogues from a speech act perspective is that each interlocutor engages in a conversation with more than one person. In an argumentative polylogue, participants engage in a structured exchange of arguments and counterarguments, with the goal of persuading others to accept their position or to come to a shared understanding of the topic at hand. Lewiński (2021) advocates that argumentation theory should consider incorporating illocutionary pluralism in argumentative polylogues. Simply put, Lewiński (2021) explains that the illocutionary force of any speech act in any conventional conversation between two speakers has one primary function. On the other hand, he asserts that speech acts should not be considered as monofunctional units in argumentative discussions when more than two people are involved. Extensively, Lewiński (2021) suggests that interlocutors in polylogues convey plural relevant illocutionary forces.

It is unavoidable that speech acts and argumentation are dependent on one another. Speech act theory and argumentation theory both possess two key qualities that make them successful. The first thing is that our interactional utterances are viewed as functional units: each utterance performs an identifiable act that is defined by the function it performs in the social world. In other words, the speech act in conventional conversation has one primary function, and Lewnski (2021) explains this by saying that when one is promising, he is not asking a question. This assumption is called illocutionary monism. The second quality is that the conventional mode of interaction involves two parties: the speaker and the hearer, who is called proponent and opponent in arguments. This assumption is called dyadic reduction. Lewiński (2021) challenged these two assumptions in relation to argumentation discourse. On the other hand, Lewiński (2021) advocates illocutionary pluralism in argumentative discourse instead of illocutionary monism because illocutionary monism and dyadic reduction do not cater to the ‘multi-agent’ and complexity of argumentative discourses.

## Research Methodology

### Data of the Study

The trailer<sup>2</sup> has more than 3 million views, and the documentary itself unfolds the story of *Queen Cleopatra* in four-episode long Netflix series: (1) Rivals (48 minutes); (2) When in Rome (47 minutes); (3) What Must Be Done (42 minutes) and (4) The Last Pharaoh (44 minutes). The trailer under study belongs to the “standard trailer” type, which is the theatrical trailer category

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<sup>2</sup> The trailer appeared on the official YouTube Channel of Netflix, in April 2023: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IktHcPyNlv4> (last accessed 4th July 2023). The official website of the film, <https://www.netflix.com/eg-en/title/81230204>

since its duration is about two minutes; semantically, the relation between the movie and the trailer is *metonymic*: the part (the trailer) represents the whole (movie) in a creative way using *grid editing*. This audiovisual advertising narrative discourse is 2 minutes and 4 seconds long; it features a long sequence from the documentary itself as well as other shots showing the production company, the title of the film, the release date, and the Netflix picture logo and promotional information.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical and methodological framework of the enthymematic analysis of movie trailers developed by Wildfeuer and Pollaroli (2017) dwells upon two interrelated levels: the first level is the construction of basic meaning involving the interpretation of film discourse and the second level is the reconstruction of argumentative discourse.

### ***Film Discourse Interpretation: A Logical Perspective***

This framework for multimodal film analysis (Wildfeuer 2012, 2014a, 2014b) considers *abductive reasoning* for the interpretation of the complexity of a film or a trailer. The framework helps construct what is referred to as logical forms of the filmic discourse and, in this way, outlines the semantic content of what is expressed audio-visually. A logical form presents an interpretation of a certain shot as some discourse structure featuring characters, objects, and circumstances. Eventualities exist on the basis of event segmentation, where the viewers segment the trailer discourse into meaningful events. Identifying proper event boundaries during perception would likely lead to better consequences for both memory and learning.

### ***Argumentative Reconstruction of Movie Trailers***

The second part of the theoretical framework explicates the arguments advanced in order to support the standpoint of the trailer: “You should watch movie X in the theater.” On the basis of the discourse units identified in a trailer, four reconstruction transformations can be applied for argumentative reconstruction: deletion of irrelevant parts, inclusion of parts expressed implicitly, substitution of obscure formulations by clearer ones, and rearrangement of parts of the discourse. Thus, it can be claimed that all discourse units can contribute to argumentation.

The link between a standpoint and the argument supporting it consists of two interrelated enthymemes: endoxical and procedural. The endoxical enthymeme is composed of 1) an endoxon - a major premise, 2) a datum - a minor premise, and 3) a conclusion. The procedural enthymeme is composed of 1) a maxim, i.e., the inferential rule (“If p then q”) enabling the link between the endoxical premises and the standpoint - a major premise, 2) a minor premise (the conclusion of the endoxical enthymeme), and 3) a final conclusion corresponding to the standpoint. The argument can be presented in a Y-shaped diagram as follows:

### ***Speech Acts and Lewiński’s (2021) Illocutionary Pluralism***

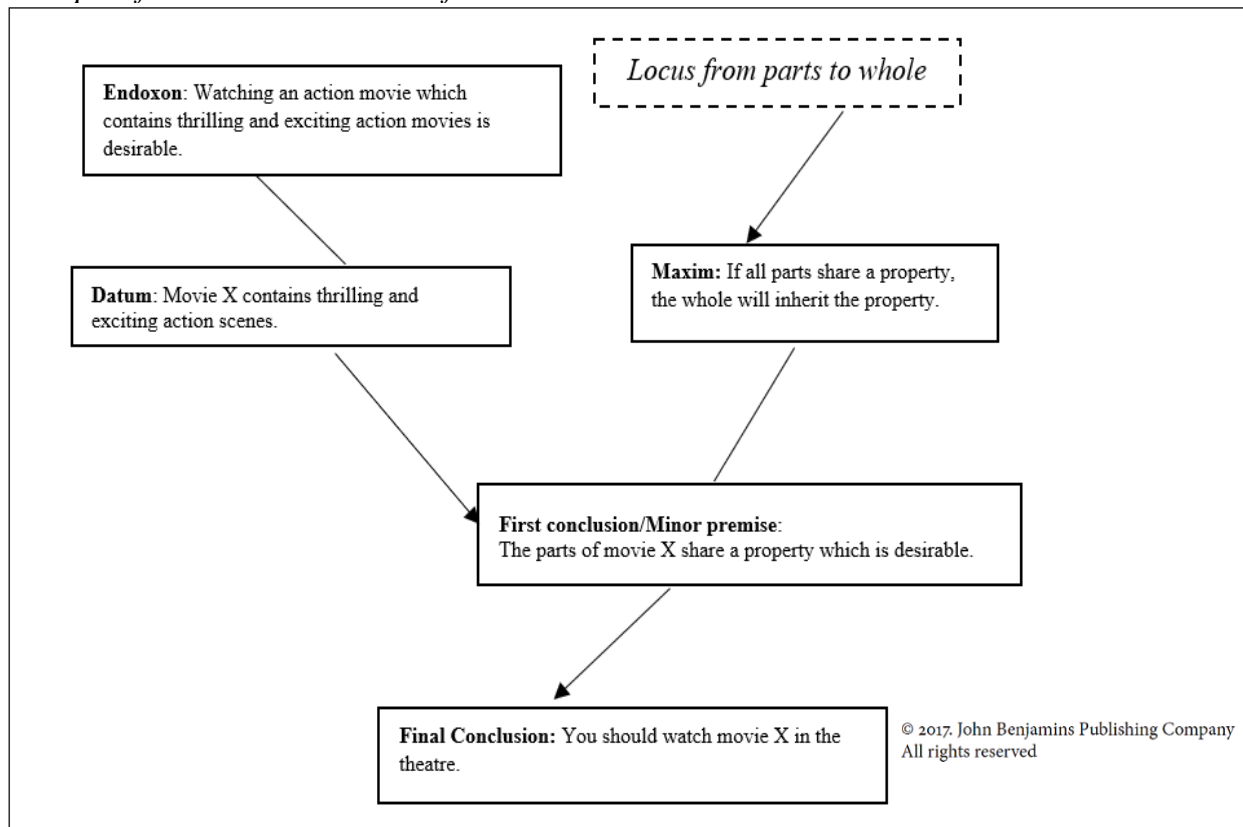
Wildfeuer and Polaroli (2017) have paid attention to how the description of the communicative context plays an integral role in describing the recurrent argumentative structure of this specific discourse genre. Since the genre of the selected docudrama trailer is made of a thread of fragmented utterances that are combined together by using montage techniques, these utterances have to be analyzed as interacting acts that are not simply an exchange of information;

rather, it is a joint human activity through which individuals and groups accomplish their objectives together (Lewiński, 2021). Thus, there must exist some presumption of rationality behind these speech acts in order for them to serve individual and collective goals. Following Lewiński (2021), these utterances constitute an interactional grid or thread that is characterized by reason or in other words, argument making property.

Lewiński (2021) argues that communicating effectively in such polylogues requires us to bring up numerous relevant angles and illocutions. His view of illocutionary pluralism overcomes “some of the entrenched assumptions of formal reasoning, especially monologicity, and monotonicity of deductive logic” (Lewiński, 2021, p. 425). Since the trailer for *Queen Cleopatra* docudrama consists of the interaction of nine interlocutors, each interlocutor contributes with an utterance (speech acts), formulating different viewpoints highlighting the story of *Queen Cleopatra*. Thus, we propose that these utterances (locutions) are argumentative polylogues whose illocutionary pluralism should be considered and interpreted in the analysis of the selected trailer.

### Figure 1

*Example of ATM Reconstruction of a Trailer Scene*

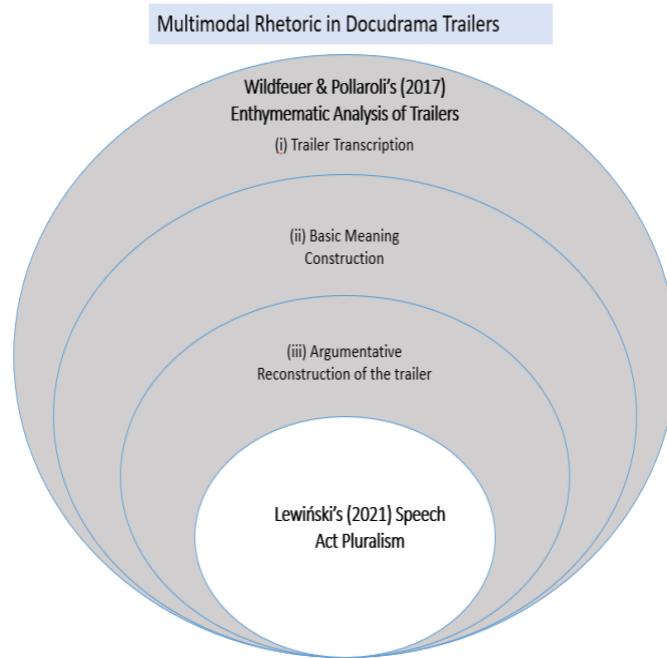


*Note.* From Wildfeuer, J. and Pollaroli, C., 2017, p. 200

### Procedures of Analysis

On the basis of the framework adopted in the study, an enthymematic analysis of the trailer under study was processed on a three-step path as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**  
*Multimodal Rhetoric in Docudrama Trailers*



*Note.* The diagram represents the two theoretical frameworks used in the study: (a) Wildfeuer and Pollaroli’s (2017) including a three-step path for an enthymematic analysis of movie trailers: Transcription, Basic meaning construction, and Argumentative Reconstruction of the trailer; (b) Lewiński’s (2021): Speech Act Pluralism

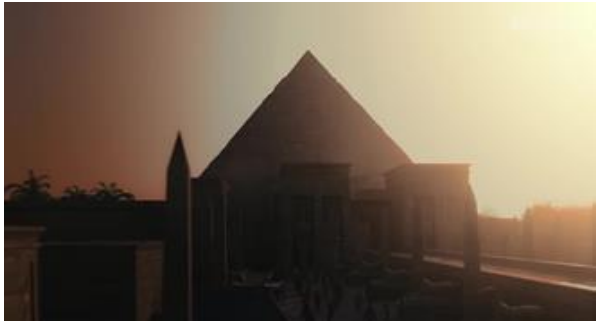



Firstly, a preliminary step in an enthymematic analysis of the trailer under study was a short transcription of the trailer, as shown in Table 1. This transcription represented the result of the inferential work done by potential viewers in relation to the content and the various segments of the trailer and, additionally, it provided an overview of how the trailer is structured and the information provided to the potential spectator in its various shots. To explain and interpret the inference process, the researchers next reconstructed the logical forms for each eventuality, and then a descriptive qualitative approach was adopted for the analysis of Speech Acts.






**Data Analysis: Multimodal Argumentative Strategies in the Trailer for *Queen Cleopatra* Docudrama**

A short transcription of the trailer for *Queen Cleopatra* showing how the trailer is constructed and the kind of information available in its various segments is presented in Table 1. This transcription represents a general description of the inference processes about the content and the structure of the trailer.



**Table 1**  
*Transcription of the Trailer for Queen Cleopatra Docudrama*

Time	Shot/Sequence	Description of the shot
0:00 - 00:02		Opening
0:02 -0:04		Orientation (Contextualisation)
0:04 - 0:05		Diegetic sequence from the documentary
0:05-0:07		Introduction of the genre

<p>0:07 - 0:19</p>	 <p>A woman in a long, flowing white dress is walking away from the camera in a dimly lit room. The scene is from a Netflix documentary.</p>	<p>Diegetic sequence from the documentary</p>
<p>0:20</p>	 <p>A group of people in traditional Egyptian attire are gathered together. The text overlay reads: "FROM EXECUTIVE PRODUCER JADA PINKETT SMITH".</p>	<p>Production Details</p>
<p>0:021 - 1:13</p>	 <p>A man and a woman are shown in a close embrace, looking at each other. The scene is from a Netflix documentary.</p>	<p>Diegetic sequence from the documentary</p>
<p>1:14 - 1:15</p>	 <p>The Great Pyramids of Giza are shown at sunset. The text overlay reads: "THE LAST RULING PHARAOH OF EGYPT".</p>	<p>Exposition</p>
<p>1:16 - 1:42</p>	 <p>A close-up shot of a woman's face, looking slightly to the side. The scene is from a Netflix documentary.</p>	<p>Diegetic sequence from the documentary</p>

1:43		
1:47		Title of the movie
1:49		Release date
1:53		Netflix Picture logo
1:54		Promotional Information

**Basic Meaning Construction in the Trailer for Queen Cleopatra Docudrama**


Based on the transcription of the trailer under study (Table 1), the longest unit is the diegetic sequence, which represents a sequence from the original docuseries; more specifically, the first episode. The sequence of the trailer typically represents many cuts and abrupt changes. Whereas the diegetic section provides a brief fragmented narrative event extracted from the first episode, the other units offer the other units offer extradiegetic, paratextual information, and metadata of the documentary. This can be realized after watching the first episode. Despite the fact that most of the viewers of this particular trailer have background and contextual information available, unlike other trailers because this trailer is about a well-known historical figure, the viewers need to infer the main argument from the multimodal, audio-visual discourse.

As for Table 2, it provides an overview of the eventualities of the audiovisual narrative. The auditory level plays an integral part in the inference process. For instance, the narration, the dialogue between the characters in the story, and the commentary of the interviewees provide an explicit historical explanation and contextualization of what is happening in the story in order to provide a sense of authenticity and accuracy. Another auditory source is the orchestral score as indicated in the third row. This dramatic orchestral score<sup>3</sup> music is a non-diegetic sound used which is a common choice for historical epics and dramas. This kind of dramatic music creates a sense of grandeur and tension, which helps to build excitement and anticipation for the story that will be told in the series (Burt, 2007; Hill, 2016).



As explained earlier, eventualities, in the analysis of movie trailers, refer to the possible outcomes or events that viewers can anticipate based on the information presented in the trailer. By analyzing the eventualities suggested by the trailer, viewers can make predictions about the plot, characters, and themes of the movie, and can decide whether or not they are interested in seeing it. As seen in the figure below, the trailer is divided into six main eventualities: Cleopatra’s rise to power, political intrigue, political tension, Cleopatra’s relationships, Cleopatra’s downfall, and historical contextualization (Commentaries).

**Table 2**


*Events in the Diegetic Sequence of the Trailer for Queen Cleopatra Docudrama*

	επ1 = Cleopatra’s rise to power
	[v] setting: inside the palace/temple
	[a] voice: “queens and mothers of nations [...]a [v] a golden crown on the head and golden jewelry on the arms - melon hairstyle - green malachite and black galena in bold designs are seen on the woman’s eyes.
	[v] camera: Close shot [a] Orchestral score music
	a ~ Cleopatra’s rise to power (επ1)

<sup>3</sup> An orchestral score is a type of music typically composed for a full orchestra, which includes instruments such as violins, violas and cellos.

	<p><math>\epsilon\pi 2</math> = Political intrigue</p> <p>[v] setting: Palace (temple)(x)</p> <p>[a] voice: .. is one of the best educated women in the Mediterranean. (b)</p> <p>[v] camera: Wide shot – horizontal angle [a] Orchestral score music</p> <p>b  ~ political intrigue (<math>\epsilon\pi 2</math>)</p>
	<p><math>\epsilon\pi 3</math> = political tension / Battle scenes</p> <p>[v] setting: battlefield</p> <p>[a] voice: Cleopatra was trying to save the country she loved from destruction. (c)</p> <p>[v] camera: medium shot [a]Orchestral score music</p> <p>c  ~ political tension (<math>\epsilon\pi 3</math>)</p>
	<p><math>\epsilon\pi 4</math> = Cleopatra’s relationships</p> <p>[v] setting: the palace (temple)</p> <p>[a] voice: “[...] She was using her relationships with Mark Antony to [...] (d)</p> <p>[v] camera: medium shot. [a] Orchestral score music</p> <p>d  ~ Cleopatra’s relationship (<math>\epsilon\pi 4</math>)</p>
	<p><math>\epsilon\pi 5</math> = Cleopatra’s downfall</p> <p>[a] voice: “I did what I had to do to protect what is mine. (e)</p> <p>[v] camera: close up shot. Cleopatra is scrunching down to hug her children. [a] Orchestral score music</p> <p>(e) ~ Cleopatra’s downfall (<math>\epsilon\pi 5</math>)</p>



	επ6 = Commentaries (historical context)
	[v] setting: studio
	[a] repr. participant: This is a woman exercising power. (f)
	[v] camera: medium shot - black background
	[a] Orchestral score music
	(f)  ~ commentaries (επ6)

The first eventuality is identified by Cleopatra’s rise to power. The trailer shows glimpses of Cleopatra as a young woman and suggests that the docudrama will explore how she overcame the challenges to become the queen of Egypt. This eventuality is likely to be a key focus of the docudrama, as it sets the stage for the other events that follow. The second eventuality is political intrigue; it suggests that Cleopatra’s reign was marked by political intrigue, and the trailer hints at some of the key events and figures involved in this drama. For example, we see Cleopatra interacting with Julius Caesar (played by John Patridge) and a Roman official in her palace. This eventuality is likely to drive much of the plot and provide a source of tension and drama. As for the third eventuality, it depicts political tension and fighting. The trailer includes several shots of battle scenes and warfare. These eventualities suggest that the docudrama will feature action sequences and depictions of ancient Egyptian warfare, which could be a draw for viewers who enjoy historical epics. The fourth one is Cleopatra’s relationships: the trailer suggests that the docuseries will delve into Cleopatra’s personal life and relationships, including her relationship with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. This eventuality might provide both a source of emotional depth and dramatic conflict. The fifth eventuality is Cleopatra’s downfall; this segment of the trailer hints at the eventual downfall of Cleopatra, and suggests that the docudrama will explore the tragic events that led to her death. These eventualities could provide a sense of inevitability and tragedy to the story, as viewers know from history that Cleopatra’s story does not end well. Finally, the last eventuality can be marked by the interviewees’ commentaries on Cleopatra’s story. Despite the fact that these commentaries are not events on their own, they are regarded as historical contextualization, and they can be inferred because of the change of action of discourse. The voice track (f) marks the boundary of (επ5) and the beginning of (επ6).

The trailer starts with the voice of a narrator, and this narration helps to capture the inference for this short sequence, as seen in the boxes above. The narration voice, along with the characters within the trailer and the commentary of different critics and historians (due to the nature of the genre), clarifies what is actually happening in the story and what is represented on the visual level. It is worth noting that the settings in the trailer for Queen Cleopatra are designed to evoke the grandeur and opulence of ancient Egypt, as well as the drama and conflict of Cleopatra's reign.

The trailer starts with the image of a pyramid, temple, and desert, along with moving, dramatic, and emotional melodies, heavy percussion, such as massive orchestral instrumentation. This kind of music is dramatic orchestral score music, and this kind of music is often used to enhance the emotional impact of a scene and to create a sense of drama, tension, or excitement. They can also be used to establish the time period or setting of the story, as in the case of historical or fantasy dramas (Hill, 2016). The opening scene begins with a narrative voice. This narrative

voice has been interrupted several times by interviewees such as Professor Shelley P. Haley<sup>4</sup> of Hamilton College, and Debora Heard, a PhD candidate in Nubian archaeology, the scholar Sally-Ann Ashton<sup>5</sup>, the Egyptian Expert Islam Issa<sup>6</sup>, the Egyptologist Colleen Darnell<sup>7</sup>, and Dr. Jacquelyn Williamson<sup>8</sup>.

As far as the pragma point of view is concerned, the argumentative difference of opinion in the selected trailer is that only one standpoint is adopted, which is “it is possible that she was Egyptian.”, and then called into doubt and refuted by another party as in “Cleopatra is black.” Thus, we hypothesize that the whole trailer is a complex speech act layered over other basic illocutions to arouse the viewer’s doubt and curiosity towards watching the docuseries to explore the ethnicity of Queen Cleopatra. The producer/maker of the selected docudrama has chosen the most argumentative part of the story of Cleopatra to be only included in the trailer of this documentary. Although this documentary consists of four episodes narrating the story of the last pharaoh of Egypt, the trailer only foregrounds Cleopatra’s African Origins. This corresponds with Wildfeuer and Pollaroli (2017), “movie trailers advance arguments in order to support the implicit claim about the worthiness of a movie to be watched” (p. 192).

The most dominant setting in the trailer is the Sahara Desert, as indicated in Table 3, and it features the Valley of Kings and the other great historical monuments in Egypt. The trailer filming covered multiple shots in an indoor studio featuring the interviewees commenting on the events. The sequence of events evokes concepts of empowering, fighting, and doubting and accordingly narrates events that perplex the viewer and evoke curiosity. These descriptions are reinforced by the fast, dynamic camera movements, and the atmosphere is heightened and made intense by the swelling sound along with taiko drum sounds.

Moreover, the meta-information of the selected trailer is displayed by using logical forms. This non-diegetic sequence neither provides any narrative events nor affects the inference processes of the trailer. However, the verbal elements are provided to draw the viewer’s attention to important information like the name of the documentary, release date, the production details. Interestingly, the meta information in the first two boxes has been provided at the beginning of the trailer, unlike the rest of the non-diegetic sequence, as seen in Table 3.

The semantic description, along with the discourse referents explicitly indicated in the above boxes, aid in providing a general overview of the sequence of the content with respect to the main topic and genre of the trailer. The symbol [t] provides information about what is written on the screen. However, the pragmatic dimension is indispensable in understanding how argumentative meaning is constructed in the selected trailer. Simply put, the analysis of the “logic” of arguments presupposes a pragmatic interpretation of a multimodal message. Thus, speech act analysis is inevitable to have a comprehensive analysis of the argumentative structure of the trailer.

The whole trailer is characterized by a complex interplay of images, sounds, verbal utterances, and voice-over. To elaborate, the trailer lays stress on Cleopatra’s power and her African black origin. This endoxon is visually supported by the factual datum by choosing Adele

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<sup>4</sup> Shelley P. Haley is the Edward North Chair of Classics and Professor of Africana Studies at Hamilton College, New York, and (in 2021) President of the Society for Classical Studies.

<sup>5</sup> Sally-Ann Ashton is a Senior Curator in the Department of Antiquities, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK. She is discussing the presentation of ancient Egypt as part of Black history, in media and museums.

<sup>6</sup> Islam Issa is a Professor of Literature and history at Birmingham City University. He is a multi-award-winning author.





<sup>7</sup> Colleen Darnell is an American Egyptologist, whose expertise includes Late Period uses of the Underworld Books, ancient Egyptian military history, the literature of New Kingdom Egypt, and Egyptian revival history.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Jacquelyn Williamson is an Egyptologist, with a special focus on gender and religious power.



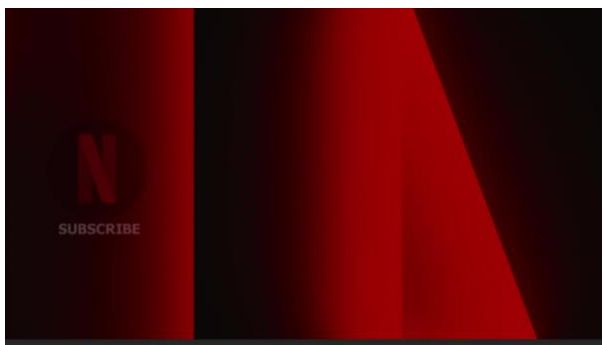
James, who is a black actress and known for her mixed ancestry, and verbally by the interviewees' commentaries as in "Cleopatra is Black," as shown in the e above.

**Table 3**

*Logical Forms in the Second, Non-diegetic Part of the Trailer for Queen Cleopatra Docudrama*

	<p>επ7: Credits</p> <p>[v] yellow color and using bold font in the name of the production platform.</p> <p>[t] A Netflix Documentary Series (g)</p> <p>g  ~ <b>credits</b> (επ7)</p>
	<p>επ8 = producer</p> <p>[v] yellow color and using bold font in the name of the producer. [a] Cleopatra is standing in the middle among her entourage.</p> <p>[t] "From Executive Producer Jada Pinkett Smith" (h)</p> <p>h ~ = <b>producer</b> (επ8)</p>
	<p>επ 9= exposition (location name)</p> <p>[v] three Pyramids of Egypt in the background, an image of sun at the top and someone standing on a hill of sand under the text. [a] orchestral score</p> <p>[t] "The last ruling pharaoh of Egypt." - the word 'Egypt' is bold (i)</p> <p>i ~ = <b>exposition</b> (επ 9)</p>
	<p>επ10a = <b>title</b> (part 1)</p> <p>[v] brownish background</p> <p>[t] "Queen" - red font (j)</p> <p>j ~ = <b>title</b> (επ28a)</p>



	eπ10b = title (part 2)
	[v]Grey portrait of Cleopatra at the background [a] orchestral score music
	[t] “Cleopatra” - Yellow font - (k)
	(k) ~ = <b>title</b> (eπ10b)
	eπ11 = release date
	[v]dark background (the colors of Netflix logo)
	[t] “Only on Netflix” May 10 - red font (l)
	l ~ = <b>release date</b> (eπ11)
	eπ 12= credits
	[v] dark red background
	[t] Netflix logo - subscribe (m)
	m ~= <b>credits</b> (eπ 12)

Despite the fact that this trailer is characterized by fast-cutting and highly complex editing, jumping between time, place, characters, and interviewees, this fragmented composition is reconstructed by illocutionary pluralism of speech acts among nine interlocutors. For instance, one utterance by a specific interlocutor does not only suggest one specific mono function, but it is a complex speech act that is layered over other basic illocutions. These basic illocutions—in the trailer assertive speech acts, but also, possibly, doubts or justifications—constitute “first order speech-acts” by means of which “second order speech acts” of argumentation are performed (Bermejo-Luque 2011, p. 60). Bermejo-Luque (2011) further asserts that argumentation is based on two interrelated “second order” illocutions: the speech-act of adducing reasons and the speech-act of concluding.

The thread or illocutionary pluralism of speech acts is one of the aspects that adds to the complexity of the reconstructed arguments in the selected trailer. The viewer is left to question the mixed ethnicity and to refute the possible Egyptian ancestry of Cleopatra, as seen in Table 4. The table below consists of four columns. The first three columns indicate the time, utterances, and

speaker, respectively. The fourth column provides the type of speech acts (either direct or indirect ones), elaborating on the function and providing possible interpretations for the different suggested illocutionary forces (illocutionary pluralism).

**Table 4**  
*Speech Acts in the Trailer for Queen Cleopatra*

Time	Utterance	Speaker	Form / Function/ interpretation
0:01 - 0:23	1. “There was a time long ago when women ruled with unparalleled power as warriors, queens and mothers of nations and there was none among them more iconic than Cleopatra.”	Narrator	DSA. The speech act being performed could be interpreted as a statement of fact or an assertion. The speaker is making a claim about a historical period when women held significant power and influence, and about Cleopatra's place as an iconic figure among them. Another function of this speech act could be to convey information, to make an argument, or to persuade the listener of a certain viewpoint especially by using hyperboles “unparalleled power” and “more iconic”.
0:24 - 0:27	2. “I would die for Egypt. What would you die for?”	Cleopatra	The first sentence is a DSA where the speaker expresses a promise or commitment. It is an expression of extreme devotion and love.  In the second utterance (the question) could be ISA (directive) as the speaker is asking the listener to provide information about what they would be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for. This could be seen as an information-seeking speech act, as the speaker is trying to elicit a response from the listener that will give them more insight into their values, priorities, and motivations. It could also be a question that justifies Cleopatra’s priorities and values.
0:28 - 0:29	3. “I am Isis. I am a God.”	Cleopatra	DSA. The function of this illocutionary act could be assertive to show power and strength as the speaker provides information about

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			herself. It could also have another illocutionary function which could be to make an argument, or to persuade the listener of a certain viewpoint.
0:30 - 0:33	4. “As long as she is a live, she is the pharaoh.”	Shelley P. Haley (An interviewee)	DSA. The function of this utterance is assertive. The illocutionary force of this utterance could also be interpreted as a declaration. The speaker is making a claim about the conditions under which Cleopatra holds the title of pharaoh, specifically that as long as she is referred to as alive, she is the pharaoh.
			This type of speech act is often used to assert or declare something, and it is typically performed with the intention of making the listener believe or accept the truth of what is being said. In this case, the speaker is making a statement about the conditions under which Cleopatra holds the title of pharaoh, and is declaring that Cleopatra meets those conditions.
0:34 - 0:37	5. “My father’s will called me coruler of Egypt.”	Cleopatra	DSA. The illocutionary force could be interpreted as a statement of fact or an assertion. Cleopatra is stating that her father's will designate her as a co-ruler of Egypt, and is providing this information to the listener.
			This type of speech act is often used to convey information or to make a claim about something, and is typically performed with the intention of making the spectator believe or accept the truth of what is being said.
0:38 – 043	6. “Julius Caesar is aware that Cleopatra is one of the best educated women in the Mediterranean. He wants to be king.”	Jacquelyn Williamson (An interviewee)	DSA. Its function can be interpreted as an assertion or statement of fact. The speaker is providing information about Julius Caesar's knowledge or beliefs regarding Cleopatra's education and intelligence.

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			<p>This type of speech act is often used to convey information or to make a claim about something, and is typically performed with the intention of making the spectator believe or accept the truth of what is being said.</p>
0:44 - 0:46	7." He wants to be King to Cleopatra the Queen."	Jacquelyn Williamson (An interviewee)	<p>DSA. It could also be assertive or making a claim to persuade the spectator of Cleopatra's strength.</p>
0:47 - 0:49	8. "There is no future without the past."	Cleopatra	<p>DSA. It could be assertive (providing information). It could be persuasive (in case the heroine is persuading the other character she is talking to).</p>
			<p>Another illocutionary force of this utterance could be how the trailer maker wants to convince the audience with Cleopatra's intellect and empowerment. It is a complex speech act.</p>
0:50 - 0: 55	9. "She was using these relations with Mark Antony to protect herself and her country."	Jacquelyn Williamson (An interviewee)	<p>DSA. Again, the interviewee is asserting a fact and the utterance could be interpreted as a justification for Cleopatra's relation with Antony.</p>
0:56 - 0:57	10. "There is no Rome without Egypt."	Cleopatra	<p>DSA. Here the illocutionary force is assertion but still the speaker's utterance could be interpreted as a validation or a justification to the previous utterance.</p>
0:58 - 1:04	11. "Cleopatra was trying to save the country she loved from destruction."	Jacquelyn Williamson (An interviewee)	<p>DSA - it could be assertion or the speaker is making an argument to persuade the spectator of her point of view.</p>
1:05 - 1:09	12. "I did what I had to do to protect what is mine."	Cleopatra	<p>Direct. Assertion or justifying</p>
1:10 - 1:12	13. "This is a woman exercising power."	Debora Heard (An interviewee)	<p>DSA. Another interviewee whose utterance could be interpreted as assertive or persuasion to make a claim about something, and is typically performed with the intention</p>

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			of making the spectator believe or accept the truth of what is being said.
1:15 - 1:19	14. “Cleopatra was a Ptolemic ruler. The very first Ptolemy is a general of Alexander the Great.”	Colleen Darnel (An interviewee)	DSA. the illocutionary function could be assertion and she is providing evidence by referring to historical facts.
1:20 - 1:22	15. “It is possible that she was an Egyptian.”	Sally-Ann Ashton (An interviewee)	ISA. The illocutionary force of this locution could be interpreted as a statement of possibility or a suggestion. The interviewee is suggesting that Cleopatra may have been Egyptian, and is making a claim about the probability of this being true.
			This type of speech act is often used to express uncertainty or to raise the possibility of something, and is typically performed with the intention of getting the listener to consider or think about a particular idea or possibility. In this case, the speaker is suggesting that Cleopatra's origins may have included an Egyptian heritage, and is inviting the listener to consider this as a possibility.
1:23 - 1:25	17. “I imagine her to have curly hair like me and a similar skin color.”	Islam Issa (An interviewee)	This could be a DSA if it could be interpreted as a statement of belief or a description. The interviewee is expressing a belief or a mental image he has of Cleopatra's physical appearance. This type of speech act is often used to convey a personal opinion or belief, and is typically performed with the intention of communicating the speaker's perspective or point of view.
1:27 - 1:32	18. “I remember my grandmother saying to me, “I don’t care what they tell you at school. But Cleopatra is Black.”	Shelley P. Haley (An interviewee)	This utterance could be a DSA and its illocutionary function could be interpreted as a statement of belief or a declaration. The interviewee is recalling a conversation she had with her grandmother about Cleopatra's

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			ethnicity, specifically indicating that her grandmother believed that Cleopatra was Black. This type of speech act is often used to convey information or to make a claim about something, and is typically performed with the intention of making the listener believe or accept the truth of what is being said.
			Interestingly, this utterance could be IDS as its form is a statement but its illocutionary function is directive (the interviewee is requesting the spectator to believe that Cleopatra is black).
1:36- 1:38	19. “I am a God. Queen of Kings.”	Cleopatra	DSA. This utterance’s illocutionary force could be interpreted as an assertive to Cleopatra’s strength and empowerment.
1:40 - 1:43	20. “Her story resonates with every woman.”	Interviewee (Shelley P. Haley)	DSA. The illocutionary function of this utterance could be interpreted as a statement of opinion or a declaration. The speaker is expressing their own belief or observation that Cleopatra's story has universal resonance among women. Another illocutionary force could be an invitation to spectators to watch the documentary since Cleopatra’s story could resonate with the viewers themselves.

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As seen in Table 4, one can deduce that the whole trailer is a complex speech act where the utterances of the nine interlocutors (narrator, main heroine, and 7 interviewees) interact and intersected together as polylogues in an attempt to motivate the viewers to subscribe to Netflix and watch the docuseries.

On another note, one can notice that the utterances (speech acts) by different interlocutors present a complex challenge. To reconstruct the argument, it is necessary to retrieve the meaning that is conveyed; namely, what is said—both verbally and visually. The “contextualized” interpretation of what is said (a specific speech act) becomes more complex when images express a specific meaning. For instance, the origin of Cleopatra has been a debatable issue for a long time. Firstly, the trailer starts and ends with a very generic verbal opener by not specifying any place or era and using the generic noun “women”, while on the visual image there is a pyramid and desert and while uttering the word “Cleopatra”, Adele James who is a black actress and known for her mixed ancestry appears on the screen. Moreover, the trailer emphasized Cleopatra’s ethnicity by displaying a thread of illocutionary pluralism of speech acts as in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Illocutionary Pluralism of Speech Acts in the Trailer for Queen Cleopatra*

Interlocutor	Utterance
Interlocutor 1: Cleopatra	I am Isis. I am a god. My father’s will called me co-ruler of Egypt.
Interlocutor 2: Colleen Darnel	Cleopatra is a Ptolemaic ruler. The very first Ptolemy is a general of Alexander the Great.
Interlocutor 3: Sally-Ann Ashton	It is possible she is Egyptian.
Interlocutor 4: Eslam Isaa	I imagined her to have curly hair and a similar skin like me.
Interlocutor 5: Shelley Haley	I remember my grandmother . . . , “I don’t care what they tell you at school. But Cleopatra is Black.”

The illocutionary force of the first interlocutor’s utterance is to assert that Cleopatra—the deictic center—is Egyptian, as indicated by using the word “Isis,” which means an ancient Egyptian goddess. However, the word Isis itself suggests a multi-ethnic origin as it is a Greek form of an ancient Egyptian word for throne. Also, the locution in “my father’s will called me *co-ruler* of Egypt” suggests the legitimacy of Cleopatra as an Egyptian ruler. Nonetheless, using the prefix ‘co’ in “co-ruler” weakens the implicature that Cleopatra is an Egyptian ruler. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the prefix *co-* implies to associate in action or to have a lesser share in duty or responsibility. This weakens the illocutionary force of assuming that Cleopatra is Egyptian. On the other hand, the illocutionary force of the second interlocutor’s utterance suggests a strong fact that Cleopatra is a Ptolemaic ruler and certainty is indicated by using the verb to ‘be’ and then this origin is emphasized by using the hyperbole “very”. This monofunctional speech act is opposed by the suggestion of the third interlocutor who ‘suggests’ that Cleopatra is Egyptian but it is weakened by the adjective “possible.” This suggestion is followed by the utterance of Eslam Isaa (the fourth interlocutor) who is an Egyptian professor of history—a fact that is *not* known by the trailer’s viewers—which suggests the fact that Cleopatra is Egyptian. However, this suggestion or implicature is not inferred by the viewers firstly because it is not indicated on the screen that the interviewee is an Egyptian professor, and secondly, his utterance is weakened by using the verb “imagined,” which gives a personal opinion unlike using the verb to be by the fifth interviewee (Shelley Haley) whose utterance can be interpreted as a request to believe that Cleopatra is Black. Thus, the pluralism of these illocutionary forces, along with the aid of the fast-cutting montage techniques, that is, one standpoint is suggested by one interlocutor and then opposed by another to leave the viewer questioning the plausibility of the reconstructed argument and then watching the documentary.

To conclude, the documentary trailer is composed of a diegetic narrative sequence and a non-diegetic sequence (meta-information) about the documentary. This composition is reflected in two main evaluative standpoints about the features of the documentary that both integrate together along with pragmatic dimension (more specifically, the illocutionary pluralism of speech acts) to support the final standpoint, which can be phrased as “You should watch *Queen Cleopatra* Documentary on Netflix (which will be released on 10th May 2023). This final standpoint is

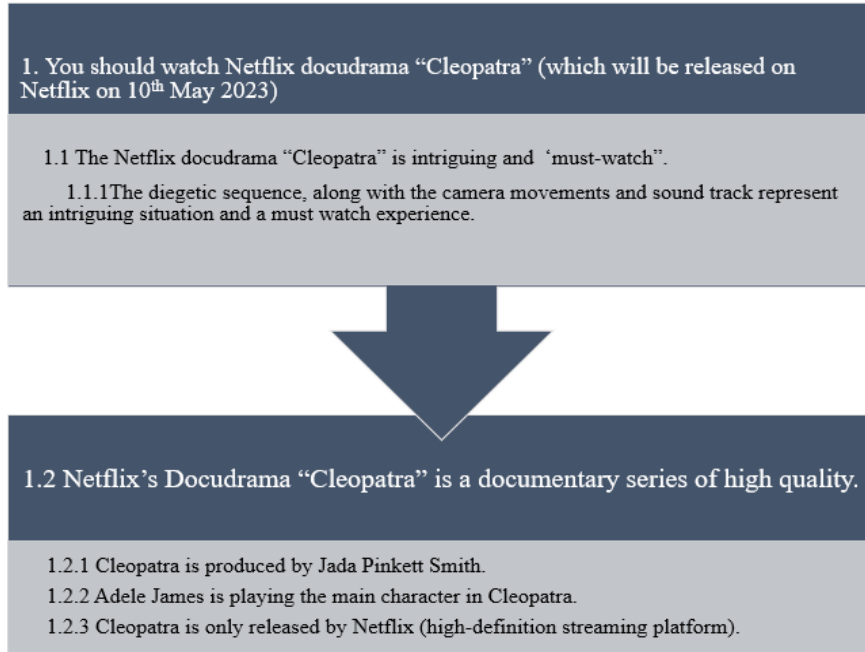
phrased based on the semantic information, which was explicitly represented by information from the logical units such as title, release date, and production details as seen in the Table 3.

### *The Argumentative Reconstruction of the Trailer for Queen Cleopatra Docudrama*

The reconstructed argumentative structure can be phrased as follows:

#### **Figure 3**

#### *The Verbalization of the Reconstructed Argumentative Structure for Queen Cleopatra Trailer*



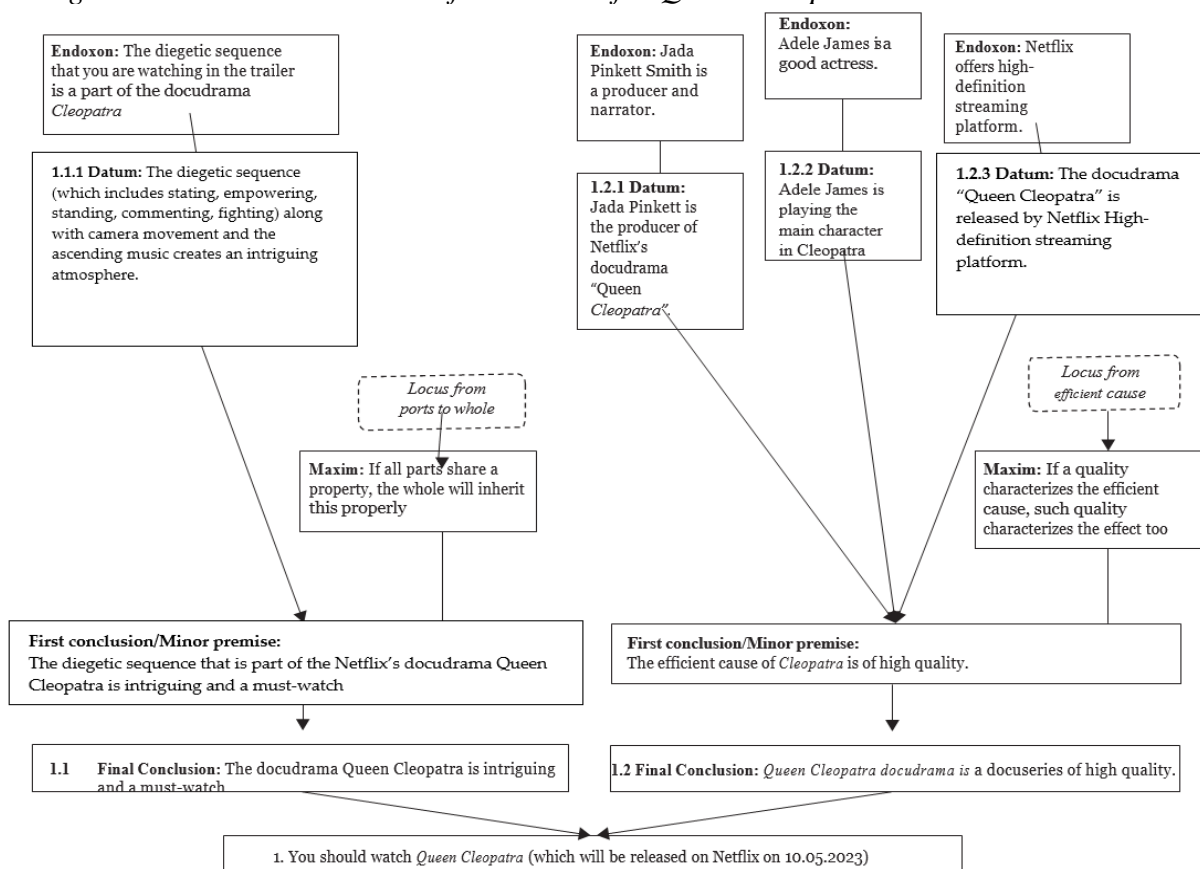
The overall quality of the docuseries is influenced by the quality of its individual components, which are logically grouped into units. These units are presented as reasons why viewers should consider watching the *Queen Cleopatra Documentary* on Netflix. Figure 3 provides a comprehensive argumentative reconstruction that integrates both the pragma-dialectical approach and the Argumentum Model of Topics.

The factual premises (data) are represented by logical units. An evaluative standpoint 1.1 “Queen Cleopatra documentary is intriguing and a must-watch” is supported by Argument 1.1.1, which is triggered by the diegetic sequence, camera movements, and Dramatic orchestral score music, all of which create an exciting and thrilling experience. The relationship between the argument and the evaluative standpoint is justified by an argument scheme based on the part-whole relationship, which follows the principle that a property shared by all parts of a whole is inherited by the whole. The statement “The diegetic sequence in the docudrama trailer is part of the docuseries Queen Cleopatra is considered an endoxical premise that, combined with the data presented in Argument 1.1.1, supports the transfer of the positive feature of being intriguing and thrilling to the entire docuseries. The arguments “Jada Smith is the producer of Netflix’s *Queen Cleopatra*” (1.2.1), “Adele James is playing the main character in *Queen Cleopatra*” (1.2.2), and “*Queen Cleopatra* docudrama is released by Netflix High-definition streaming platform” (1.2.3) show that Queen Cleopatra is not only intriguing and a must watch because it shows an exciting



and thrilling narration, but it is also a docuseries of high quality (1.2). The actress and the production company are not properly “parts” of the docuseries, but rather they are efficient reasons since they constitute a producer-product relationship. The above three arguments, the quality of the streaming platform, the actors, and the director is accepted as an endoxical premise and, therefore, transferred to the docuseries in accordance with the locus from an efficient cause which activates the maxim “If a quality characterizes the efficient cause, such quality characterizes the effect too.” (Wildfeuer and Pollaroli, 2017, p. 210).

**Figure 4**  
*The Argumentative Reconstruction of the Trailer for Queen Cleopatra*



Note. Adapted from Wildfeuer and Pollaroli (2017, p. 189).

### Conclusion: Key Findings and Suggestions for Further Research

The goal of this research is twofold: (1) to fill in the gap in the literature with the dearth of research on movie trailers as argumentative enthymematic discourses, and (2) to experiment with the application of the theoretical framework proposed by Wildfeuer and Pollaroli (2017) for the enthymematic interpretation of movie trailers since the framework has been recently developed and is still under investigation when integrated with another framework: the illocutionary pluralism in argumentative polylogues (Lewiński, 2021) in our attempt to fulfill the objectives of the study.

Though the research findings of this study cannot be generalizable since we have focused on the analysis of only one movie trailer, Netflix’s *Queen Cleopatra* Documentary (2023), the key findings can be summarized as follows:

- a) The research findings reaffirm the methodological consideration endorsed by Pollaroli (2014): analyzing complex audiovisual discourse requires the synthesis of approaches and disciplines.
- b) The research findings support the findings arrived at by Wildfeuer and Pollaroli (2017): the interpretation of movie trailers, representing a particular discourse genre characterized by an intricate interplay of semiotic modes, is a highly complex operation requiring potential spectators to carry out much inferential work. A movie trailer would likely trigger questions that are left unanswered and can be answered by the spectator only when watching the film. These audio-visual discourses, defined as enthymematic discourses, invite the spectators to draw inferences and to retrieve the arguments in support of the claim that the movie is worth watching.
- c) The adoption of the integrated two-level framework proposed by Pollaroli and Wildfeuer (2017) integrated with Lewiński's (2021) on the pluralism of illocutionary acts in argumentative polylogues has proved to be plausible for an enthymematic analysis of the selected data. Since the framework is based on a formal-logical perspective, it provided a solid foundation for the reconstruction of the arguments advanced by the trailer producers for the claim to subsequently watch the movie.
- d) The illocutionary pluralism of speech acts among the nine interlocutors has added to the complexity of the argumentative structure of the trailer under study. Moving beyond the proposed semantic level in the original framework helped corroborate the 'basic meaning construction' level, which is a prerequisite for the 'argumentative reconstruction' level.

The researchers claim that this research might contribute to the research on movie trailers, an area that is still under-explored; more specifically, it fills in the gap in the literature since most previous studies on movie trailers focused on persuasive strategies, and little research has been conducted on movie trailers as 'enthymematic discourse' where the interplay of multimodal resources leads the potential spectator to reconstruct the argument advanced by the maker of the trailer. Furthermore, in this study we have highlighted a new dimension in the first level of the framework recently developed by Wildfeuer and Pollaroli (2017)—the pragmatic dimension; more specifically, illocutionary pluralism in polylogues. Additionally, the current study might partially contribute to the research on multimodal argumentation that has flourished since 1996 with a special issue of *Argumentation and Advocacy* (Pollaroli, 2014) in the belief that in real argumentative discourses arguments are constructed not only verbally but also through the interplay of available semiotic resources in a certain context.

This research might inspire other researchers to further develop the path of research on movie trailers as one complex form of film genres. Further research can still be conducted on applying this two-level framework to a corpus of movie trailers. Directions for future research might also include giving focus to other pragmatic aspects in the framework adopted in the study or perhaps applying this framework to other genres of enthymematic discourses.

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