"We Believe That…": A Pragma-Dialectics Study of Argumentative Indicators Used in Student Debate Programs

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Abstract. The current study intends to examine the argumentative indicators produced by second language learners in a university-level student debate competition and the functions of the indicators in each stage of argumentation (confrontation, opening, argumentation, and conclusion). The researchers employed a descriptive qualitative case study design. The data were collected from two university student debate teams' speeches (government and opposition teams) produced in Indonesia's Java Overland Varsities English Debate (JOVED) debate competition. The researchers recorded and transcribed the debaters' speeches and analyzed the transcriptions to determine the types of argumentative indicators and their purposes at each argumentation stage. The findings showed that students used twelve argumentative indicators in their confrontation, opening, argumentation, and conclusion stages, indicating rich cognitive processes in debate situations. More specifically, the debaters used propositional behavior indicator, mixed-dispute indicator, and indicator of emphasis expression in their confrontation stage, as well as using indicators of resistance and indicators of proposals in the opening stage. Moreover, the debaters used diverse argumentative indicators in their argumentation stage: comparison, symptomatic argumentation indicators, non-univocal subordinate argumentation indicators, univocal-non-univocal various argumentation indicators, non-univocal cumulative coordinating argumentation indicators, and indicators of acceptance of propositions with restrictions. The debaters employed two indicators in their conclusion stage: the government side (protagonist/affirmative) maintains or withdraws their standpoint, while the opposition side (antagonist/negative) maintains or withdraws their doubt. The results are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge focusing on effective argumentation strategies.

Keywords: Argumentative Indicator, Argumentation Stage, Student Debate.

1   Introduction

Language speakers utilize debate as a strategy to make decisions or defend their ar-
guments. Different sides debate to bring others to their point of view [1]. The center
of debate activities is one's mastery of the topics or issues and the strength of one's
arguments. Debaters confront opposing side's viewpoints on topics that have a wide-
spread impact on one another [2]. As an argumentation strategy, debate has been used
in many contexts, including legal (i.e., in politics and law) and educational purposes
(e.g., argumentation, second language teaching, and student competition). Among the
popular debating systems in student-level debate used for educational purposes are
British Parliamentary and Australian-Asian Parliamentary debate systems [3], [4].

Van Eemeren and Grotendorst [5] introduced a pragma-dialectical approach to ex-
amine argumentation in linguistic studies, as displayed in Table 1. The approach is
centered on the communicative aspects (pragmatics) and logical discussion principles
(dialectics) of one's argumentation [6]. Following van Eemeren et al.'s [7] pragma-
dialectic approach, debaters' arguments can be classified into four stages of argumen-
tation: confrontation, opening, argumentation, and conclusion. Each stage of argu-
mentation can be distinctively marked using certain expressions, words, or expres-
sions such as, in my opinion, to my mind, the way I see it, therefore, etc. These ex-
pressions and words that mark the shift or moves in the argument, such as proposing
an argument or standpoint, are usually referred to as argumentative indicators [7]. [7]
further classified these indicators into more detailed sub-indicators and suggested that
each indicator serves a specific function.

Table 1. Eemeren, Houtlosser & Henkemans' [7] distribution of argumentation and argu-
mentative indicators in the argumentation stage.

Argumentation stage	Argumentative indicators
Confrontation	Indicators of standpoints Indicators of disputes
Opening	Analyzing the distribution of the burden of proof The analysis of establishing starting points
Argumentation	Clues for analogy argumentation Indications for symptomatic argumentation Indications for causal argumentation Indications in the verbal presentation of arguments
Conclusion	Establishing the result of the discussion Dialectical profile of how the result of the discussion is established The protagonist maintains or withdraws his standpoint. The antagonist maintains or withdraws his doubt.

Argumentative indicators are essential to argumentation because they indicate
one's main arguments. Language speakers want to show the points to be conveyed so

that the focus of the arguments is clear. Words or expressions that become argumentative indicators are not always found in the text or the results of someone's speech. Sometimes argumentative indicators are not spoken explicitly, so it is a little complicated to determine what argumentative indicators are used. Attempts have been made to map various types of words or expressions that can indicate argumentative indicators in discussing arguments or texts. [7] wrote that argumentative indicators are the basis of discourse which facilitates the identification and reconstruction of the argument moves made in argumentative discussions and texts. Argumentative indications are classified into confined/limited and broad types. The confined/limited notion of argumentation relates to the precise language used in the discussion moves, such as "in my opinion," "thus," and "because." The broad connotation of the phrase refers to any word or articulation used by participants in the conversation [7].

Most previous studies on student debate focused more on the role of debate activity in improving students' language skills [8]–[16]. Very few studies examined the argumentation aspect of debate [17]–[19]. [17] found that the two adverbs indicate an argument structurally and inferentially. In addition to indicating the presence of premises-conclusion relationships, they frequently follow patterns of causal argument from the cause to the consequence. The Italian adverb *evidentemente* is a more reliable signal because it is more common and less polysemous. The auxiliary words used in reporting are indicated as predictions for the following news. More recently, Kamariah et al. [18] reported that The Mata Najwa talk's argumentation indicators reveal the speakers' facial emotions. The distribution of speech acts at each level of the argument served as the argumentation indicator. Another research by Betti and Ghadhab [19] investigating Donald Trump and Bill Clinton's speeches using argumentative indicators and their function reported that both Donald J. Trump and Bill Clinton used significantly different indicators of argumentative in every argumentation stage.

What is not yet clear from these previous studies is the use and function of each argumentative indicator in different stages of argumentation since these studies analyzed the argumentative indicators in speeches globally. These studies viewed speech or argumentation as a monolithic entity and neglected that argumentation consists of several distinct stages serving different argumentative purposes. Consequently, the previous studies might capture the overall argumentative structure of one's speech and persuasion strategy, but they failed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic role of argumentative indicators and their effectiveness in different argumentation stages. Moreover, these studies might ignore the nuanced changes of indicators that occur during the shift between each stage of argumentation (i.e., confrontation, opening, argumentation, and conclusion). Therefore, there is an urgent necessity for a more detailed and stage-specific examination of argumentative indicators in speeches.

The current study aims to fill the gaps in the previous studies by analyzing EFL learners' argumentative indicators at each stage of argumentation (i.e., confrontation, opening, argumentation, and conclusion) and the functions they serve concerning the speaker's argumentation discourse. By examining the argumentative indicators at each argumentation stage separately, the researchers wanted to obtain a more detailed and sophisticated understanding of second language users' cognitive process of developing

arguments. In addition, a more thorough analysis of argumentative indicators in each argumentation stage may help evaluate language speakers' effectiveness of argumentation and communication. Since each argumentation stage requires different rhetorical strategies, a more thorough understanding of argumentative indicators will add insights into how second language users may customize their arguments and messages in each argumentation stage to gain more optimal effects.

2   Method

To analyze the argumentative indicators used in second language learners' argumentation and the functions they serve, the researchers employed a descriptive qualitative case study design by collecting and analyzing the speeches produced by EFL learners who competed in a university-level debate competition. Debate competition is an essential means for students to participate in a structured, argumentative, and persuasive discussion. The debate competition participants are divided into two opposing sides: government (also called protagonist/affirmative) and opposition (or antagonist/negative). The learners/debaters use a variety of argumentative strategies, techniques, and indicators to propose, strengthen, and defend their arguments while simultaneously attacking and weakening their opponents' arguments.

The data collection techniques used were observation and recording [20]. The researchers selected two teams participating in the prestigious university-level Java Overland Varsities English Debate (JOVED) tournament. The competition follows an Australian-Asian Parliamentary Debate System where two opposing teams (government and opposition teams; each team consists of three debaters) debate a controversial issue. The debaters' (N=6) speeches were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for further analysis. During the match, the researchers also took notes on the debaters' debate matter (content), manner (ways to propose arguments), and structure (method).

The data were analyzed using identification method by determining the identity of a particular lingual unit by using determinants outside the language, apart from the language, and not part of the language in question. The researchers identified the argumentation stages by dividing the transcriptions into four stages: confrontation, introduction, argumentation, and conclusion. Afterward, the researchers identified the argumentative indicators used at each argumentation stage and the roles performed by each argumentative indicator. Two inter-coders independently coded a selected part of the transcriptions and evaluated the coding to confirm the reliability of the study and reach an agreement. Afterward, the researchers analyzed the categories using a pragmatic approach. Kesuma wrote that the pragmatic method is an equivalent method that is the determining tool for the opponent or speech partner [21]. This method is used to identify, for example, linguistic units according to the reactions or consequences that occur or arise in the opponent or speech partner when the speaker speaks the linguistic unit. The analysis results in this study were presented using ordinary words (informal method) [21] and were reported descriptively.

3   Finding and Discussion

The researchers found 12 argumentative indicators and sub-indicators used by student debaters in expressing their arguments at each stage of argumentation, shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The student debaters' argumentative indicators

No	Argumentative indicators	Sub-indicators	Example of linguistic expressions
Confrontation stage			
1	Indicators of standpoint	Propositional attitude indicating expression	*We believe* *We think* *We say*
2		Force modifying expression	*This is actually that I want to prove on my first point of my argument*
3	Indicators of disputes	Indicators of a mixed dispute	*we don't think that* *we don't think so* *we never say*
Opening Stage			
4	Analyzing the distribution of the burden of proof	Indicators of a challenge to defend a standpoint	*How Why What*
5	The analysis of establishing starting points	Indicators of a proposal to accept a proposition as a starting point	*so what we want is simple*
Argumentation stage			
6	Clues for analogy argumentation	Indications in the follow-up of argumentation by comparison	*It also*
7	Indications for symptomatic argumentation	Indications in the presentation of symptomatic argumentation	*Means* *Ok let's characterize what is good parenting inside the family* *Basically*
8	Indications in the verbal presentation of arguments	Non-Univocal indications for subordinative argumentation	*So Because*
9		Univocal and Non-	*We have two justifications in*

No	Argumentative indicators	Sub-indicators	Example of linguistic expressions
		Univocal indications for multiple argumentation	*here, Into two ways* *First And secondly* *First of all* *Secondly* *Even if* *Furthermore*
10		Non-univocal indications for cumulatively coordinative argumentation	*Beside those things*
Conclusion stage			
11	The protagonist maintains or withdraws his standpoint		*therefore what we want in this debate is very clear that we want to stick in the status quo*
12	The antagonist maintains or withdraws his doubt		*now, what they also fail to do in the status quo*

Those 12 argumentative indicators are divided into four argumentative stages (confrontation, opening, argumentation, and conclusion). The students used two indicators in the confrontation stage, two indicators in the opening stage, three argumentative indicators in the argumentation stage, and two indicators in the last stage, as will be discussed below.

3.1   Confrontation stage

Two main indicators used in the confrontation stages are Indicators of standpoint and indicators of disputes, shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Argumentative indicators used in the confrontation stage and their functions

Argumentative indicators	Sub-indicators	Functions
Indicators of standpoint	Propositional attitude indicators	Showing their belief in the basic arguments in the debated case and assuming that the opposite side needs an explanation

Indicators of disputes	Force modifying expression	Convincing the opposing party by adding additional arguments
	Mixed-dispute indicator	defending the speaker's argument

In the confrontation stage, speakers often used propositional attitude indicators to show their belief in the basic arguments in the debated case. Using this indicator, the speaker assumes that the opposing side needs an explanation. For example,

"We believe that the current government even subsidizing and giving tax break for marriage in the welfare state, but the government believes that they endorse into good movement such as sustainability of family."

The expression *"we believe"* is a form of propositional behavior indicator that explains to the opposing party his beliefs, namely about the basic arguments that are put forward.

The debaters also used force modifying expressions to signal that the speaker wants to convince the opposing party of something but also assume that without additional arguments, the opposing party will not understand what the speaker expects to believe what is said.

"This is actually that I want to prove on my first point of my argument, on how and why we believe that the government has no right to intervene the private of person, before that we believe the idea on how the family or the parents rise in their family, contribute their family."

The expression "this is actually that I want to prove on my first point of my argument" was used to counter the argument of the speech partner to defend their burden of proof. The thing that becomes their burden of proof is that speakers must explain why and how they believe that the government has no right to suppress everyone's rights and that every family has ideas for developing their families that contribute to the family itself.

The third commonly used indicator used in the confrontation stage is a mixed-dispute indicator. This indicator serves to defend the speaker's argument [7].

"The second point is whether affection can happen in the status quo. We believe that holiday or baby sister cannot happen in grass society west in middle income where mother and father most in blue colour worker, they have to go in the factory, we don't think that, the affection can happen when the mother is staying away saying away. But now, the state patronize where is the best parenting for the family. But only give empowerment the basic of love and affection which is frequency of interaction between the parents and the children."

To express resistance to the speech partner's argument, the debater used the expression *"we don't think that"* indicating the speaker maintains the argument by providing basic arguments and showing doubts about the opponent's argument that affection can occur from a long distance.

In the confrontation stage, the students tend to use indicators of standpoint to purpose their standpoint toward the case they debated. While, indicator of dispute is used to show that they do not agree with the opposite standpoint.

3.2   Opening stage

The argumentative indicators and functions found in the opening stage are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: Argumentative indicators used in the opening stage and their functions.

Argumentative indicators	Sub-indicators	Functions
Analyzing the distribution of the burden of proof	Indicators of a challenge to defend a standpoint	Showing doubts regarding the opposing side's argument and demanding further explanation.
The analysis of establishing starting points	Indicators of a proposal to accept a proposition as a starting point	asking whether someone agrees or disagrees with the presented arguments.

As shown in Table 4, debaters distribute the burden of proof among the government and opposition teams by challenging and questioning the opposing party's argument to show that their side had doubts about the opposing side's argument and demanded further explanation/elaboration. For example,

"Mr. Speaker, one point that we regret when they said a modal, they are forgetting to answer how they concern perform maximally when they are taking their children at home that the important the government in welfare state as they are claiming that it is justify by giving payment for the parents, we think, this is not enough, since there are no clear explanation we believe this is very redundant in the first place."

The expression *"one point that we regretted when they said a modal, they forgot to answer how"* is an indicator of a challenge to defend a standpoint implicitly indicating the speaker goes against the basic argument of the speech partner and asks for clarification about how parents can optimally care for children at home by giving parents a salary.

Debaters may also use an indicator of a proposal to accept the opposition as a starting point for asking whether someone agrees or disagrees with the presented arguments.

"To Mr. speaker, currently housewife and househusband is not pay right, so what we want is simple, we are going to give wage, we are going to give salary to this housewife or househusband."

The *"so what we want is simple"* indicator was stated by a debater who accepted the proposition in the debate about remuneration for housewives. The indicator is a starting point for speakers to move on to further arguments that support any point the hearer wants in this debate. The main point in the speakers' case is giving housewives salaries or wages.

In this opening stage, the students tend to use Analyzing the distribution of the burden of proof which show how the students are doubt with the opposition and need more explanation about the case. While, the indicator "The analysis of establishing starting points" is use to know whether the opposite side agree or disagree with the standpoint.

3.3   Argumentation stage

Debaters tended to use more diverse argumentative indicators in their argumentation stage because it is the center of the argumentation process in debate. Table 5 displays argumentative indicators used in the argumentation stage and their functions.

Table 5. Argumentative indicators used in the argumentation stage and their functions

Argumentative indicators	Sub-indicators	Functions
Clues for analogy argumentation	Indications in the follow-up of argumentation by comparison	Creating assumption regarding the relationships between two things v
Indications for symptomatic argumentation	Indications in the presentation of symptomatic argumentation	Convincing the opposite side by elaborating one's standpoint using characteristics, signs, or examples
Indications in the verbal presentation of arguments	Non-univocal indications for subordinative argumentation Univocal and non-univocal indications for multiple argumentation Non-univocal indications for cumulatively coordinative argumentation	Supporting previously-stated argument

(a) Indications in the follow-up of argumentation by comparing an entity with other entities using certain language expressions.
For example,

"In the status quo, the developed countries, underage marriage is being subsidize highly if you choose to not abort your children, it also a form of quantifying love to money."

The expression "it also" is implicitly used by the government to compare two things: providing subsidies for those who do not abort their wombs and giving salaries to housewives. The government assumed that both things were similar by implicitly comparing love and money.

(b)   Indications in the presentation of symptomatic argumentation known as characteristics and signs.
Take a look at the following example,

"Secondly, good parenting means need supervision from parent, right, on how they have to monitor the children from pornography inside TV, more even prevent from drug and smoking, and how we see the story black people really influenced to this drug and smoking because their parent doesn't want to spend more time with them, and we think, this is crucial time."

The expression *"means"* was used to further explain the characteristics of good family parenting. The debater intends to convince the opposite side by elaborating his/her standpoint using characteristics, signs, or examples.

(c) Non-Univocal indications for subordinative argumentation

Below is an example of non-univocal indication for subordinative argumentation.

"First is about government which has an authority to be social engineer to shape their people thought. So, basically Mr. Speaker the government has basic owns to shape their society in improvement in better life"

The argumentative indicator *"so"* implies that the argument is to support the previous argument, hoping that the speech partner understands what the speaker is saying.

(d) Univocal and Non-Univocal indications for multiple argumentations

An example of this category is as follow:

"We have two justifications in here, first the government can engineer this value, because this value is generally believe to be good for greater community, neighbor and for individual itself. And secondly, it is complementary from the other policy which has government implemented, so this value is nurturing children right, to be stay at home in nurturing children."

The argumentative indicator, *"we have two justifications here",* indicates that government parties have more than one argument in their efforts to defend their basic arguments. The following expressions marked with enumeration, first and secondly, indicate the giving of arguments with the first indicator. It is assumed there will be a second, third, or fourth argument.

(e) Non-univocal indications for cumulatively coordinative argumentation

Take a look at the following example.

"Because now they to be awarded by the government, and even they are being paid, this is a motivation of that, beside those things, we think parent always wants to take care toward their children."

The argumentative indicator beside those things shows a cumulative coordinative relationship in the argument, which supports and justifies the basic argument. Giving one argument is enough, but the government strengthened the basic argument by adding new arguments.

In the argumentation stage, the students use Clues for analogy argumentation, Indications for symptomatic argumentation, Indications for symptomatic argumentation, Indications in the verbal presentation of arguments in delivering their argumentation.

3.4   Conclusion stage

Table 6 highlights two indicators used in the conclusion stage and their functions.

Table 6: Argumentative indicators used in the conclusion stage and their functions.

Argumentative indicators	Functions
The protagonist maintains or withdraws his standpoint	Strengthening the argument by defending one's standpoint and expressing doubt
The antagonist maintains or withdraws his doubt	toward another's standpoint

In the conclusion stage, the speakers use indicators in which both sides (government and opposition) maintain or withdraw their standpoints or doubts. Take a look at the following examples:

"Therefore what we want in this debate is very clear that we want to stick in the status quo to provide channel for every people to embrace the value of the appreciate, we believe housewife should not become a job, because it is very important to give maximum benefit toward children itself. thank you."

The expression *"therefore what we want in this debate is very clear that we want to stick in the status quo"* show how speakers maintain their standpoint in the case that housewife should not be paid because housewife is an honor role in the family.

The following example further strengthens the idea of maintaining or withdrawing one's standpoint or doubt.

"Now, what they also fail to do in the status quo, they never only provide adequate explanation upon why after working all times, they can maintain the a good interaction between parent and children. On the point of feminist movement, we also see lack respond coming from negative team, they say the best is feminist campaign, many discussions that show that they are weak actor, they never engage with our basic case."

Here, the speakers put their doubt into the opposite speaker by using the expression *"now, what they also fail to do in the status quo"* and the expression *"On the point of feminist movement, we also see lack respond coming from negative team".* They feel that the opposition fails to prove their standpoint and lacks explanation about their argumentation.

In conclusion stage, the students tend to use the protagonist maintains or withdraws his standpoint and the antagonist maintains or withdraws his doubt which indicate that the students want to defend the standpoint or still express their doubt toward the opposite team.

The debaters' use of argumentative indicators indicates that they understood each indicator's functions and mainly used the indicators to signal their respective argumentative moves based on each stage of argumentation. Additionally, the argumentative indicators signal the shift between one argumentation stage and another. This finding corresponds with [19] study, which reported that speakers in the American electoral campaign debates used different argumentative indicators in their stages of argumentation based on the functions of indicators. Each speaker chose a different indicator argumentative in defending the standpoint, strengthening the argumentation, delivering doubt, disputing the argumentation, and showing the conclusion at the end of the debate. The result of this research shows the various expressions which indicate the argumentative indicators in every stage, it is different with result of Kamariah's [18] study which investigated the argumentative indicators through speech acts approach.

4   Conclusion

The second language learners used distinct and diverse argumentative indicators in their argumentation stages. The debaters' confrontation stage was indicated by propositional attitude indicators, a mixed-dispute indicator, and force modifying expres-

sions, while their opening stage was indicated by a challenge to defend a standpoint and a proposal to accept a proposition as a starting point. As the center of the debate, the argumentation stage was marked with indicators: clues for analogy argumentation, indications for symptomatic argumentation, and indications in the verbal presentation of arguments. Lastly, the closing stage was marked with indicators showing the protagonist and antagonist maintaining or withdrawing their standpoint or doubt.

This research adds to the current body of knowledge of the argumentation and cognitive processes employed by second language learners, particularly concentrating on argumentative indicators and their functions across the argumentation stages in debate. This study enriches our insights into debate discourse and may offer a framework for developing second language learners' argumentation skills in both academic (in-class language teaching) and real-world situations.

A number of limitations need to be noted regarding the present study. First, the government-opposition division may not adequately reflect the various argumentation processes in other situations. Not all argumentation processes involve affirmative and negative sides. In addition, the selected debate teams may have argumentation characteristics and skills that are not representative of the bigger population of debate teams. In addition, the results of the qualitative case study involving two debate teams cannot be generalized to other debate competitions or wider debate situations. Therefore, findings should be evaluated within the context of this study. More research using multiple case studies or involving more participants with diverse subjects and topics should be considered to enhance the findings of argumentative indicators and their functions and increase the applicability of the findings into a broader spectrum of debate contexts. Moreover, further studies may focus on debate situations involving other debating systems (e.g., British Parliamentary debate system) or real-world contexts (e.g., presidential or parliamentary debates and courtroom).

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