

**A PRAGMA-DIALECTICAL STUDY OF SPEECH ACT AND  
ARGUMENTATIVE INDICATOR IN OXFORD UNION DEBATE**

***IS ISLAM A PEACEFUL RELIGION (2013)***

**A GRADUATING PAPER**

Submitted in partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Gaining  
the Bachelor's Degree in English Literature



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YOGYAKARTA**

**2023**

## **MOTTO**

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.

The important thing is not to stop questioning.”

- Albert Einstein

## **DEDICATION**

**The researcher dedicates this paper to the following:**

1. My beloved parents, Mr. Sudarsono and Mrs. Rini Suryani, who always pray for me and give me support physically and mentally in finishing this graduating paper
2. My beloved brothers and sister, Susilo, Fawwaz, and Destyana, who always encourage me to finish this paper
3. All the lecturers in English Department
4. And myself



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ARGUMENTATIVE INDICATOR IN OXFORD UNION DEBATE *IS ISLAM A  
PEACEFUL RELIGION (2013)***

Kami menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang Munaqosyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

Atas perhatiannya, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

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I certify that this graduating paper is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this graduating paper. Other researcher's opinion or finding included in this research is quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

PAI : Propositional Attitude Indicator

FME : Force Modifying Expression

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**ABSTRACT**

This research aims to find speech acts and the argumentative indicators performed and used by the positive side and the negative side along with its function in their speech in Oxford Union debate *Is Islam a peaceful religion?* (2013) using pragma-dialectical approach of argumentation theory developed by Van Eemeren and Grootendorst. This study uses descriptive qualitative method. The result shows the most frequent of speech act performed and argumentative indicator used by both parties to introduce their speech acts in each stage of critical discussion. The positive side in the confrontation stage mostly performs assertive to express standpoint by introducing PAI and FME, in the opening stage mostly performs commissive to accept the burden of proof by introducing indicator of acceptance the challenge to defend standpoint, in the argumentation stage mostly performs assertive to advance argument by introducing analogy argumentation indicator and coordinative argumentation indicator, in the concluding stage mostly performs assertive to maintain standpoint and commissive to repeat unacceptance of standpoint by introducing argumentative indicator of maintaining initial standpoint. While the most frequent of speech act performed by the negative side in the confrontation stage is assertive to express standpoint by introducing PAI and FME. In the opening stage are commissive to accept the burden of proof and directive to challenge the burden of proof by introducing the argumentative indicator of it, in the argumentation stage is assertive to advance argument by introducing symptomatic argumentation indicator and coordinative argumentation indicator, in the concluding stage are assertive to maintain standpoint by introducing argumentative indicator of maintaining initial standpoint and commissive to repeat unacceptance of standpoint.

**Keywords:** *Pragma-dialectical, argumentative indicator, speech act, Oxford Union Debate 2013*

**KAJIAN PRAGMA-DIALEKTIKA TINDAK TUTUR DAN INDIKATOR  
ARGUMENTATIF DALAM DEBAT OXFORD UNION  
*IS ISLAM A PEACEFUL RELIGION* (2013)**

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**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan tindak tutur dan indikator argumentatif yang dilakukan dan digunakan oleh kedua pihak bersamaan dengan fungsinya dalam pidato mereka di setiap tahap diskusi kritis dalam perdebatan Oxford Union *Is islam a Peaceful Religion?* 2013 menggunakan pendekatan pragma-dialektika dari teori argumentasi yang dikembangkan oleh Van Eemeren dan Grootendorst. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Hasil menunjukkan tindak tutur yang paling banyak dilakukan dan indikator argumentasi yang digunakan oleh kedua pihak untuk mengenalkan tindak tuturnya di setiap tahap diskusi kritis. Di tahap konfrontasi pihak positif banyak memperformasikan assertive untuk mengekspresikan sudut pandang dengan menggunakan indikator PAI dan FME, di tahap pembuka banyak memperformasikan commissive untuk menerima beban pembuktian dengan menggunakan indikator penerimaan beban pembuktian, di tahap argumentasi adalah assertive untuk menyampaikan argument dengan menggunakan indikator argumentasi analogi dan koordinatif, dan di tahap kesimpulan adalah assertive untuk mempertahankan sudut pandang dan commissive untuk pengulangan bahwa sudut pandang tidak diterima dengan mengenalkan indikator mempertahankan sudut pandang awal. Sementara tindak tutur yang paling sering dilakukan oleh pihak negatif di tahap konfrontasi adalah assertive untuk mengekspresikan sudut pandang dengan mengenalkan indikator PAI dan FME, di tahap pembuka adalah commissive untuk menerima beban pembuktian dan directive untuk menantang membela sudut pandang dengan mengenalkan masing-masing indikatornya, di tahap argumentasi adalah assertive untuk menyampaikan argument dengan menggunakan indikator simtomatik dan koordinatif, dan di tahap kesimpulan adalah assertive untuk mempertahankan sudut pandang dengan mengenalkan indikator mempertahankan sudut pandang awal dan commissive untuk pengulangan bahwa sudut pandang tidak diterima.

**Kata kunci:** *Pragma-dialektika, indikator argumentasi, tindak tutur, debat oxfordUnion 2013*

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

Argumentation is the process of exchange of idea to defend one 's claim which creates communication. Therefore argumentation serves communication function in the discourse such as to convince others and to asses one's argument (Mercier & Sperber, 2011, p. 60). Argumentation arises as a response to foresee disagreement and also the justifications which designed to achieve the goal of settling the disagreement in the particular dispute (Eemeren, 2018, p. 21). Humans are used to the phenomenon of argumentation because they often use it in everyday life, both formally and informally (Eemeren & Verheij, 2017, p. 2101). In advancing argument, people uses certain words and sentences not only to assert but also to question, deny statement, respond to statement and so on (Eemeren et al., 1996, p. 2) . Turk (2002) stated that speech, as spoken means, is one of the media for expressing ideas and communicating with others. Speech can be used as an instrument to convey agreement or disagreement, argumentation, and a standpoint on a particular issue.

In this study, the researcher uses Oxford Union debate videos which questioning the nature of Islam entitled *Is Islam A Religion of Peace?* Published in 2013 on Oxford Union official YouTube channel. This debate conducted after the killing of British soldier by two Muslims in Woolwich. Moreover, this debate had gone viral at the time because of the speeches from one of the positive parties Mehdi Hassan. The debate is conducted by two parties, the



positive side who stands for Islam as a peaceful religion consisting of Matthew Handley, a history student at Oxford University and a mentor for the Debate Mate Programme, Mehdi Hasan, a renowned British journalist, broadcaster, author, political analyst, host of UpFront, and one of the 500 most important Muslims in the world, the Muslim public intellectuals, Adam Deen, who founded and directs the Deen Institute. The negative side has Anne-Marie Waters, a well-known journalist, activist, and Labour Party member who has fought to prevent Sharia law from being imposed in Western countries. Standpoint Magazine editor, Daniel Johnson, who has studied modern law, and Peter Atkins, a former Oxford University professor of chemistry and a fellow of Lincoln College who contributed a great deal of scientific criticism of religion, were two individuals who contributed to this article. Both parties in the debate had difference in opinion and they presented their standpoints and defended it by proposing arguments in order to assure the addressee of their standpoint.

Both parties used numerous words, expressions and sentences in delivering their argument and defending it so that they can influence and assure the addressee of their standpoint. The negative side proposed arguments primarily on the violence intrinsic that Islam has in the Quran and in the Islamic law applied in Islamic countries. They also listed violence evidence that happened over the years committed by Muslims which they used as proof that Islam is not a peaceful religion. The passage below is one of the statements

proposed by Anna-Marie who served the role of the negative side as well as the first speaker of this side

“Let me tell you what actually whips up fears of Islam. We take it from the top. 911, the London Underground Bombings, Madrid, Mumbai, Mali, Bali, northern Nigeria, Sudan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Yemen, Pakistan, death for apostasy, death for blasphemy, death for adultery, death for homosexuality, gender segregation, gender discrimination, unequal testimony between men and women in legal proceedings, child marriage, amputations, beheadings, imprisonment for being raped, anti Semitism, brokers execution, as I've said, for this, that and the other. The slaughter of Theo van Goff on the streets of Amsterdam, death threats on the streets of London, butcher those who insult Islam [...]” (1:46-2:35)

She also stated that Muslims follow what it says in the Quran even though it is pertaining to violence like beating their woman. She referred it to the Quran surah An-Nisa' [4]:35

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاصْرَبُوهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنِ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيًّا كَبِيرًا

*“Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand.”*

Those claims of the negative side, by all means are unacceptable to Muslims. Sourced from the website of oxfordstudent.com, the debate result is determined by audiences who vote 'yes' or 'no' regarding the motion. The result of this debate is 268 audiences agreed on the motion Islam is a peaceful religion and 168 audiences disagreed. This debate is interesting to be analyzed because

at that time Islamophobic arose in British since the British soldier's killing, however, the positive side won the debate with the motion Islam is a peaceful religion. In this connection, the researcher wants to find out how both parties in the debate pointed out their speech regarding to the issue. The researcher uses the pragma-dialectical approach of argumentation theory proposed by Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst (1970).

### **1.2 Research Questions**

Based on the statements above, the followings are outlined the research questions:

1. What speech acts and argumentative indicators are performed and used by both parties in their speech?
2. How the roles of speech acts and argumentative indicators in their speech?

### **1.3 Objective of Study**

1. To find out speech acts and argumentative indicators are used and performed by both parties in their speech
2. To identify the roles of speech acts and argumentative indicators in their speech

### **1.4 Significance of Study**

This study provides the insight into the way to examine an argumentative discourse in an analytical way that can be used as a reference for the next researchers and readers. Furthermore, this research can be used to

enhance the understanding of how to defend and convince the acceptability of our standpoint to others and can be used as an additional reference in analyzing and evaluating argumentation.

### **1.5 Literature Reviews**

In regard to argumentation analysis, the researcher has found several prior research related to this study.

The first is a journal entitled *A Pragma-Dialectical Study of The Argumentative Indicator in American Electoral Campaign Debates* written by Mohammed Jasim Betti and Amal Odeh Ghadhab (2020). This study used the pragma-dialectical approach of argumentation theory. The objective of this research is to examine the argumentative indicators used by both presidential candidate and their function in their debate and exposing the likeness and distinction between Trump and Clinton in using argumentative indicators. The analysis is mixture of a qualitative and a quantitative analysis. The result showed that mostly they used the same argumentative indicators in confrontation stage, argumentation stage, the total number of all stages, the use of argumentative indicators' function and its total in all stages,

Second is a graduating paper entitled *Argument Pattern Used by Samina Ali's Speech What Does the Quran Really Say About a Muslim Woman's Hijab?* Written by Diva Hana Zhafirah Hardy (2018). This research aimed to expose how her speech can represent Samina Ali's point of view on hijab and how she defends it. The researcher analyzing the argument pattern

and the completeness level of argumentation that is used in Samina Ali's speech *What Does the Quran Really Say About a Muslim Woman's Hijab?* By using Toulmin's argumentation theory. The researcher found that her argument mostly is based on Samina Ali's perspective. The researcher also notice that the speaker mostly used the completeness level semi-complete argument.

The third research is a journal entitled *Tough Women Against Pandemic Covid-19 Speech Acts of Women's Arguments in Public Discussions: Pragma-Dialectical Studies* (2023) written by Kamariah, Kisyani Laksono, and Agusniar Dian Savitri. The objective of the study was to expose the speech acts used by the speakers in the Covid-19 Pandemic forum discussing. This study used qualitative descriptive. The research finding showed that there are argumentative speech acts such as assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative, which are found in four stages of critical discussion.

The fourth research is a journal entitled *Argumentative Indicators in Mata Najwa Talk Show Pragma-dialectical Study* written by Kisyani Laksono, Agusniar D. Savitr, Suhartono Suhartono, Darni Darni, Udjang Pairin (2021). This research is descriptive qualitative and seeks to expose argumentative indicators in the Mata Najwa talk show using pragma-dialectical studies. The results showed that the argumentation indicators found in the Mata Najwa talk show the speakers' expressions. The researcher found that the speech acts used by the debate participants in each stage were assertive, commissive, directive, and declarative speech acts.

The fifth research is a journal by Abdullah Najim Abd Al Khanaifsawy entitled *A Pragma-Dialectical Study of David Hare's 'Stuff Happens'* (2021). This study seeks to identify the highest frequency fallacy of the characters and to show the most speech acts and its function which highlight the characters' own personalities. As a result, the researcher found that the model of analysis used is practicable on the data and the speech acts used in the play are an efficient tool in approaching the characters. This research has a similarity to the prior studies above in its focus on analysis of argumentative discourse. Nevertheless, this study has some differences in its object and the theory that will be used in examining argumentative discourse. This research uses speech videos as the research object which taken from YouTube and uses the transcription of it as the primary data. In analyzing data, this research uses the pragma-dialectical approach proposed by Frans H. van Eemeren dan Rob Grootendorst (1970) as its theoretical approach.

### **1.6 Theoretical Approach**

The researcher uses the Pragma-Dialectical approach of argumentation theory proposed by Frans H. van Eemeren dan Rob Grootendorst in conducting this study. It integrates critical rationalism's dialectical insight with pragmatic insight of speech act theory. Its main objective is to establish a solid foundation for methodically enhancing the analysis, assessment, and oral and written argumentative discourse production (Eemeren, 2018, p. 33). This approach sees argumentative speech as views exchange between two parties engaged in a disagreement (Snoeck Henkemans, 2014, p. 42). The speaker, in advancing

argument, uses words and expressions that refer to standpoint and arguments. These words or expressions are called argumentative indicators which is indicating that argumentative moves are probably in progress (Eemeren et al., 2007, p. 1).

There are four stages of a critical discussion in pragma-dialectical which distribute the exchange of speech act that occurs in each stage. These stages consist of confrontation stage, opening stage, argumentation stage, and concluding stage (Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2003, p. 366). Pragma-dialectical applies the amendment of speech act theory by Searle (1979). It employs Illocutionary act, which Searle called it as speech act. These speech acts are distributed in the different stages of critical discussion. Speech acts that serve roles in each stage of critical discussion such as assertive, directive, commissive, and usage declarative (Eemeren et al., 2007, pp. 12–14).

## **1.7 Methods of Research**

### **1.7.1 Type of Research**

The researcher uses the descriptive qualitative method in conducting this study. This method is applicable to this research because it provide an in-depth understanding to issue by analyzing the content (Hennink et al., 2020, p. 7). Furthermore, the descriptive qualitative method is suitable for conducting this study because first, the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis for this study is the researcher itself. Second,

the outcome and data of this research are non-numerical and descriptive, using more words rather than numbers (Merriam, 2002, p. 5)

### 1.7.2 Data Source

The primary data of this study is the transcription of Oxford Union debate participants which discuss the nature of Islam about *Is Islam A Religion of Peace?* published in 2013. The primary data consists of transcription of six debate videos that will be taken from YouTube with a duration of about twelve to twenty minutes:

- a. A video entitled Matthew Handley, Islam is A Peaceful Religion, Oxford Union which published on [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWOLzYY\\_ZtY&t=258s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWOLzYY_ZtY&t=258s)
- b. A video entitled Adam Deen, Islam is A Peaceful Religion, Oxford Union which published on [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ik41uzfc\\_so](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ik41uzfc_so)
- c. A video entitled Mehdi Hasan, Islam is A Peaceful Religion, Oxford Union which published on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jy9tNyp03M0&t=1s>
- d. A video entitled Anne-Marie Waters, Islam is Not A Peaceful Religion, Oxford Union which published on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQjZHFnmADQ&list=RDCMUCY7dD6waquGnKTZSumPMTlQ&index=2>



- e. A video entitled Daniel Johnson, Islam is Not A Peaceful Religion, Oxford Union which published on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MDlZk89oaQ&t=48s>
- f. A video entitled Peter Atkins, Islam is Not A Peaceful Religion, Oxford Union which published on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkxakWfz59o&t=54s>

### **1.7.3 Data Collection Technique**

The researcher uses collection and examination methods in collecting the data. Collection refers to the gathering or accumulation of things relating to the research topic, such as records, artifacts, documents, etc (Yin, 2011, pp. 147–148). These methods are applied to this study with the following steps, first, the researcher downloads the Oxford Union debate videos *Is Islam a Peaceful Religion?* from Oxford Union official YouTube channel. Second, the researcher downloads the transcription of the positive and negative side speeches. Third, the researcher groups the speeches based on the speaker position in the debate as the positive side and the negative side. Fourth the researcher identifies the words and expressions used by positive and the negative side in their speeches that play part as argumentative indicators, statements used by the positive side and the negative side that play part as speech acts that have specific function for defending the parties' standpoint and convincing the listener about the acceptability of their standpoint together in indicating four stages in the part

of speeches went through by the positive side and the negative side in their speeches. Then the researcher analyzes argumentative indicators applied in performed speech act in each stage of the positive side and negative side speeches, speech acts performed in each stage of the positive side and the negative side speeches, and four stages in the parts of the positive and negative side speeches.

For the sake of clarity in this paper, the researcher symbolizes the argumentative indicators as following; (i) for propositional attitude indicator, (ii) for force modifying expression, (iii) for dispute indicator, (iv) for indicator of proposal to accept the starting point, (v) for indicator of challenge to defend standpoint, (vi) for indicator of accepting the challenge to defend standpoint, (vii) for analogy argumentation indicator, (viii) for symptomatic argumentation indicator, (ix) for causal argumentation indicator, (x) for subordinative argumentation indicator, (xi) for coordinative argumentation indicator, (xii) for multiple argumentation indicator, (xiii) for indicator of maintaining standpoint, and (xiv) for indicator of withdrawing standpoint.

In the analysis of pragma-dialectical, the confrontation stage are denoted in **bold**, the opening stage are denoted in *italics*, the argumentation stage are underlined, and the conclusion stage are expressed in CAPITALS (Eemeren, 2018, pp. 95–96). It employs numbers (such as 1, 2, 3, and so forth) to symbolize referring to the standpoint and in the case of implicit standpoint is denoted by the parenthesis (4).1, etc. The simplest structure of

argumentation, a single argument is denoted by the number of the stance followed by the number of its own (for example, 2.1). Argumentation subordinative, represented by the standpoint's number, decimal points, and its own number (e.g., 2.1.1, 2.1.1.1, and so forth). Coordinative is represented by allocating letters (2.2a, 2.2b, 2.2c, etc.) to arguments that support the same standpoint. Multiple is represented by the standpoint's number followed by its own number (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and so on) (Eemeren et al., 2008, p. 70).

#### **1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique**

The researcher uses the pragma-dialectical approach of argumentation theory by Frans H. van Eemeren dan Rob Grootendorst for analyzing the data that have been collected with the following steps. First, the researcher watches the videos of the Oxford Union debate and reads the transcription of the utterances of the positive side and the negative side. The second step is examining argumentative indicators in the data included words and expressions that have specific function in the process of critical discussion. Then the researcher identifies and interprets what the function of these indicators in the in the debate. Fourth, the researcher examines and identifies the speech acts and its role that is performed in the process of argumentative discussion used by each speaker of both sides in delivering their speeches and then the researcher identifies the roles of speech acts carried out by the positive side and the negative side in each stage of critical discussion. After the researcher finding argumentative indicators and

performed speech act in both sides' speeches, then the researcher will be able to identify four stages in the part of both sides' speeches.

### **1.8 Paper Organization**

This paper is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter it briefly describes the background of study, research questions, objectives of study, significance of study, literature reviews, theoretical approach, methods of research, and paper organization. In the second chapter is theoretical framework which explains the pragma-dialectical approach of argumentation theory in detail. The third chapter covers research findings and discussions that offers data analysis. In the final chapter it includes conclusions and suggestions.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 4.1 Conclusions

This section presents the concluding of this research. There are several points that can be concluded based on the result of this research as follows

- 1.a The result shows the most frequent speech act performed by the positive side in the confrontation stage is assertive to express standpoint (31%) by introducing propositional attitude (4%) and force modifying expression indicator (3%). In the opening stage is commissive to accept the challenge to defend standpoint (3%) by introducing the indicator of acceptance the challenge to defend standpoint, in the argumentation stage is assertive to advance argument (9%) by using analogy argumentation indicator (3%), and coordinative argumentation indicator (27%). In the concluding stage are assertive to maintain standpoint (1%) and commissive to repeat that standpoint is not accepted (1%) by introducing the argumentative indicator of maintaining standpoint.
- b. In advancing argumentation, the positive side makes argumentation based on analogy relationship to compare two things, Islam and all religions that are peaceful faith.
- c. The positive side in anticipating the addressee' criticism mostly creates coordinative argumentation. A number of arguments that made by the positive side are taken together making a conclusive defense of their standpoint.

d. The positive side introduces some of their standpoint by using the propositional attitude indicator which indicates that their standpoint involves their subjective notion and they are commit to their standpoint.

2.a The most frequent speech act performed by the negative side in the confrontation stage is assertive to express standpoint (23%). Some of them are introduced by means of propositional attitude (1%) and force modifying expression indicator (1%). In the opening stage are directive to challenge to defend standpoint (2%) and commissive to accept the challenge to defend standpoint (2%) by introducing the indicator of challenge to defend standpoint and acceptance the challenge to defend standpoint, in the argumentation stage is assertive to advance argument (6%) by using symptomatic argumentation indicator (4%) and coordinative argumentation indicator (21%). In the concluding stage is assertive to maintain standpoint (2%) and commissive to repeat that standpoint is not accepted (1%) by introducing the argumentative indicator of maintaining standpoint.

b. The negative side made argumentation based on symptomatic relation to describe the characteristic of Islam that opposed to peace.

c. The negative side in anticipating the addressee' criticism mostly by creates coordinative argumentation. A number of arguments that made by the negative side are taken together making a conclusive defense of their standpoint.

d. The positive side introduces some of their standpoint by using the propositional attitude indicator which indicates that their standpoint involves their subjective notion and they are commit to their standpoint.

## **4.2 Suggestions**

This research focuses on speech act and argumentative indicator performed and used by the positive side and the negative side in their speeches. The researcher found that this object of research can be analyzed more deeply using pragma-dialectical theory by exposing the strategic maneuvering of the positive side and the negative side speeches. The researcher suggests for the next researcher to analyze this object with a focus in strategic maneuvering of pragma-dialectical which analyses the rhetorical view in the stage of critical discussion, for instance by identifying the “topical potential” available in the discussion stage concerned.

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