Argumentation Strategies of the Early Childhood Language in the Gender Perspective

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Abstract: The way children view the world is a process of thinking critically that reflected through language expressions that can be seen from pragmatic strategy in giving argumentation. To date, the study on child’s language in Indonesian is only focused on the form and structure of argumentative sentences. Meanwhile, the study that is focused on child’s language viewed from gender perspective has not yet been conducted significantly, especially that is related to the argumentation strategy. Hence, the study of this paper will be focused on child’s pragmatic strategy reviewed from gender perspective. The subject and object of this study covered the use of sentence on children aged 5-6 years old. The study applied descriptive qualitative method. The data were collected using participated and non-participated observation methods. The data then were analyzed using the pragmatic match method. The result of this study shows that there were some differences between the boys and girls reviewed from the frequency intensity of the uttered argumentation types and the pragmatic strategy in expressing intention. The girls had better abilities in qualitative and comparison-type argumentations. On the other hand, the boys were better in analogy-type argumentations. Either the boys or girls had equal ability in argumentations type quantity and expert opinion. In the use of pragmatic strategy, the boys used more representative strategy than the girls. In contrast, the girls were skilled in arguing using control, expressive, and social strategies than the boys.

1 INTRODUCTION

Human always think critically in deciding their life perspectives. The ability to think critically can be traced during child phase. Children have their own world and the way children view the world is a process of critical thinking that expressed in their own uttered languages. Riley and Reedy (2005) confirm that children decide their positions and are collaboratively connected with their surroundings through expressing ideas. Children always express something, either when they are playing, studying, or interacting with their family. Those speech acts (at least are potential to) play role in the process of emerging opinion differences (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2003). This is because every child has different experience schemes in capturing the world, one from another. Children start developing verbal utterance for different purposes and functions.

Utterance that emerges opinion differences is the form of argumentation. Dowden (2011) states that argumentation refers to the conclusion of more than one statement utterance. Child’s argumentation utterance is reflected in the use of pragmatic strategy in daily utterance, either when asking questions, expressing opinions, stating explanations, showing expressions, and asking someone else to do what their wants. The argumentation uttered by children is classified into some types; which are quality type, quantity type, comparison type for consistency, expert opinion, analogy, and other types (Bova and Arcidiacono, 2014). The description of argumentation type is explained as follows:

1) Quality-typed argument is an argumentation viewed from quality aspect of something, for instance good/bad, light/heavy, and etcetera.
2) Quantity type refers to the argumentation viewed from the quantity aspect.
3) Comparison type for consistency is the argumentation that refers to the behavior of past utterance. This type of argumentation holds on to
the principle of “affirmation of something in the past explicitly or implicitly is necessary to be maintained now.”

(4) Type of expert opinion is defined as the argumentation that refers to the opinion that has authority. In this issue, authority can be referred to the experts or adults who are considered have further knowledge by children.

(5) Analogy type is the argumentation that refers to the comparison of two equal things at major premise when minor premise appears then the conclusion is taken by referring to major premise with the following illustration:

**Major Premise:** Generally, Case C1 is similar to case C2. **Minor Premise:** Proposition A is true (false) in Case C1. **Conclusion:** Proposition A is true (false) in case C2.

The pragmatic strategy itself is the way children deliver their utterance meaning. Next, Owen (2012) confirms that illocution act has appearance sequence of intentions that is meant to be delivered. Lakoff (in Eckert and Ginnet, 2003) argues that the difference of children argumentation strategy from pragmatic aspect can be viewed from the aspects of question mark (pemarkah tanya), sign of certainty/doubt, reinforcement word, indirect form, meaning-reducing mark (pemarkah pengecil makna), euphuism, and politeness. Coates (2013) states that the pragmatic strategy itself involves responding way, certainty mark (penanda kepastian), question mark (pemarkah tanya), question, instruction and direction, swearing way, taboo language, and praise. While according to Musfiroh (2017), the type of argumentation strategy is based on its pragmatic function category, which is in the form of control, representative, expressive, social, tutorial, and procedural as depicted in table 1.

**Table 1: Illocution Functions Used by Children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Category of Pragmatic Function</th>
<th>Initial Speech Act</th>
<th>Preferred Intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Asking the interlocutor to do something</td>
<td>Asking something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Protesting/ opposing</td>
<td>Protesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>Asking answer</td>
<td>Asking content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Giving name</td>
<td>Giving name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Answering</td>
<td>Answering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responding question</td>
<td>Responding question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explaining</td>
<td>Explaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>Showing anger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Greeting</td>
<td>Greeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Saying good bye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Repeating/practicing</td>
<td>Repeating/practicing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Calling</td>
<td>Calling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In gender perspective, mindset and way of arguing between man and woman have differences that can be traced from early years. According to Hellinger and Buhlmann (2003), the study of language difference between boy and girl is directed to the understanding about how gender ideas are interpreted to the way of perception and universal construction toward gender in language unit by linguistic, social, and culture parameters. Rowland (2014) confirms that girls collect language faster than boys. In western countries which tend to be industrialist, the girl gets mature faster in language cognitive process. On the other hand, language socialization process of something can also affect child’s language ability. It influences the differences of interaction topic. Parents tend to talk more about a particular topic to boy or girl. It shows that boy tends to dominate words related to transportation than girl does.

Speech of argument has difference gradation in boy and girl language, especially the used strategy. Haslett (1983) confirms that girls develop strategy at first time, are politer and complex at the use of pragmatic strategy in daily conversation. This issue is strengthened with a study result by Ladegaard (2017) in Denmark that shows the girls are politer compared to the boys. It is marked with the use frequency of Danish politeness marker with 53% of the girls and 47% of the boys. Clark (2012) states that in a role play study, the boys and girls were asked to persuade their mothers to let them play or buy them toys. In the study scenario, the mothers were directed to refuse for five times. The results of the study showed that the girls tended to practice a strategy in adjusting their language in giving arguments with the norms and meaning about fairness than the boys. The study conducted by Wade and Smart (via Morrow, 2006) shows that in searching for support when talking with friends, the girls emphasized more on the problems, while the boys emphasized more on the importance of friend for diversion and activity. Therefore, early childhood, either the boys or girls, are capable to start strategizing in giving arguments.
The study on child argumentative utterance in Indonesian is often merely focused on the sentence form and structure. Meanwhile, the study focusing on the argumentation pragmatic strategy of child reviewed from the gender perspective has not yet conducted significantly. This study will discuss how the argument of the boys and girls in their daily life, either from the aspect of type of argumentation or the aspect of applied argumentation strategy.

2 METHODS

This study implemented qualitative descriptive method. In this study, 20 children aged 5-6 years old (8 boys and 12 girls) were involved as participants. The object of this study covered argumentative utterance in Indonesian, which uttered by the participants. Mukherji (2015) confirms that to descriptively study early childhood participants, the data would be suitably collected through observation method, either participatory or non-participatory. The data of this study were collected through both participatory and non-participatory observation methods. Then, the data were noted down and analyzed pragmatically. Merriam (2009) declares that qualitative study must describe the data from the field as it is. The data that have been noted down and analyzed then were presented descriptively in the form of narrative extracts and strengthened by simple diagram to show the frequency of data appearance.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Types of Argumentation

Argumentative sentence is often uttered in some conversations when children are interacting in their surroundings. The form of argumentative sentence depends on the conversation topic chosen by children and their interlocutors. Child’s argumentation topic can be reviewed from either internal or external aspects. The internal topic involves an idea about oneself that is divided into a number of categories such as physical, characteristic, and behavior. The external topic focuses on the conversation related to other than the child’s self, such as parents, play pals, neighborhood, schools, hobbies, games, and activities. The external topics covers the categories of physical, characteristic, behavior, similarities, and differences. From each topic talked in child’s utterance, arguments appeared in various types. The types of argument put forward by the children in this study were the type of quality, type of quantity, type of comparison, type of expert opinion, and type of analogy.

Diagram 1: Distribution of Types of Argumentation on Early Childhood

The most stated type of argumentation is the quality argument. Then, the second position stated type of argumentation by the child’s is the comparative argument. The last position, there are analogy argument and expert opinion argument.

The interesting thing is that if it is reviewed from the gender aspect of the early childhood, the argumentation intensity between the boys and girls will be clearly seen. The difference of argumentation use in each type can be viewed on the following diagrams.

Diagram 2: Distribution of Types of Argumentation based on Gender

Diagram 2 shows that the girls outperform the boys in types of quality and comparison argumentations. Meanwhile, the boys outperform the girls in terms of analogy argumentation. On the other hand, the boys and the girls have equal ability in types of expert opinion and quantity argumentation types.
3.2 Strategy of Argumentation

When communicating, children are able to perform several argumentation strategies such as representative, control, expressive, and social. This statement is pictured in diagram 3, which is related to the distribution of strategies used in each type of argument.

Diagram 3: Pragmatic Strategy of Each Argumentation Type

The results of the study as shown in diagram 3 indicate that the most used strategy of argumentation is the representative strategy. The second most used strategy is the control strategy. Children are able to express their intentions so that the interlocutors follow what they want. The control strategy is performed through commanding, protesting, or opposing with prohibition. The expressive and social strategies are already acknowledged and applied to the interlocutors. Early childhood is already able to show expressions to communicate their intentions. They also have known the way of making friends using social strategy. The boys applied the representative strategy more than the girls. In contrast, the girls were more competent in arguing using control, expressive, and social strategies than the boys.

The description of strategy in each type of argument will be explained as follows.

3.2.1 Strategy of Quality Argumentation

In uttering quality-typed argument, the boys and girls performed four strategies, namely control strategy, representative strategy, expressive strategy, and social strategy. The differences of strategy usage in uttering the quality-typed argument are illustrated in the following diagram.

Diagram 4: Pragmatic Strategy for Quality-Typed Argumentation

In diagram 4, the boys seem somewhat representatively outperform the girls in terms of quality argumentation. Quality argumentation on boys is an argumentation when they explain something. The boys are more detail and quick response in explaining something they know to their mates. It is seen on the following dialogue illustration.

(Data no. 17)

[♂] Brian: “Aku tadi lihat cacing gede banget, tapi udah di buang sama Cello”

“I saw a super big worm, but Cello has thrown it.”


“Where was it? Was it under the ground or somewhere?”

[♂] Brian: “Nggak, aku lihat di atas baru jalan terus di buang sama Celo”

“No. I saw it on the ground, just crawling, then Cello threw it away.”

Data (17) situates when Brian stated that he saw a worm then his friend threw it away. As for the nature of the worm, Brian’s argument signifies the quality of the worm size. Adeva responded by asking more detail about the spot of the worm. Brian answered that he saw the worm crawling on the ground, then his friend threw it away. Reaffirmation was carried out in detail by Brian including the event activities.

On the other side, girls tend to outperform boys when arguing for quality in terms of control, expressing feeling, and social. Early childhood has already recognized the control argument strategy that covers asking something, prohibiting over forbidden things, and protesting over something. The girls tend to protest when something is not fit with the norms.
they known, while the boys tend to directly prohibit strictly. (Data no. 39)

[♀] Maya: “Ustadzah, Saila gangguin aku!”
“Ustadzah, Saila is bothering me!”

[♀] Sachi: “Saila tadi kamu nakal ya?”
“Saila, were you badly behaved?”
“Nanti kamu jangan main sama saila ya!”
(whispering to Abin)
“You don’t play with Saila. Okay?”

[♂] Abin: “iya, kita main ayunan aja ya jangan sama saila.”
“Okay. Let’s play swings, not with Saila.”

Data 39 situates the girls indirectly protesting to her teacher (called ustadzah) when their friends behave out of the norms. Interestingly, the girls tend to gather alliance when they are about to protest to someone else who is contradicting the norms they believed. Then, they will also ask their alliance to stay away from the child who is considered badly behaved.

The girls can expressively state their arguments about what they feel. The girls and boys can show their social arguments in the forms of greeting, saying farewell, and asking permission. What makes it different is that the girls were more responsive to greet their friends than the boys were.

(Data no. 25)
During break time in Bee Class.

{wajah tampak ceria}
“Hey, Zafran, Zafran, I ever saw your house. Your house paint is brown.”
{showing her cheerful face}

[♂] Zafran: “Bukan rumah aku catnya warna putih.”
“It’s not my house. My house is painted white.”

[♀] Milla: “Tapi, aku kemarin jalan-jalan sama ibu, aku lihat kamu di depan rumah.”
“But, I took a walk with my Mom yesterday, and I saw you in front of your house.”

[♂] Zafran: “Aku gak lihat kamu”
“I didn’t see you.”

[♀] Milla: “Aku kan di dalam mobil, gak jalan kaki!”
{tampak kesal nada meninggi}
“I was in the car, not walking!”

(Data No. 4)
[Ust Vio] : “Dihitung coba! {membuka buku bergambar rumah adat dan menghitung banyaknya rumah}
“Let’s count this!” {Opening a picture book of custom house and counting the number of the houses}
The pupils: “satu, dua, tiga, empat, lima, enam.” “One, two, three, four, five, six.”

Ust Vio: “enam yang mana ya?” “Which six is it?”

Andien: “gak kelihatan ust...” {menyela} “I can’t see it, Ust.” {interrupting}

Ust Vio: “nanti teman-teman menebalkan angka yang sesuai jumlah rumah. Kalau enam berarti seperti ini.” {tetap melanjutkan penjelasan tidak menghiraukan kalimat Andien} “Later on, you all will trace the dots of numbers based on the number of the houses. If it is six, it will be like this.” {Continuing her explanation and ignoring Andien’s sentence}

Ust Vio: “are you ready?”

The girls: “Yes, I am ready”

Ust Vio: “oke, ustadzah panggil Mbak Andien” “Alright. I call Mbak Andien.” {Then, Andien comes forward to take the book}

Kastara: “Halaman berapa ust?” “What page, Ust?”

Ust Vio: “Halaman berapa itu Mbak Andien?” “What page is it, Mbak Andien?”

Andien: “Halaman 41” “Page 41.”

Kastara: “Hah?? Bukan ya, kamu salah!” “Hah?? No, it’s not. You’re wrong!”

Ust Vio: “41? di bawah coba dilihat, halaman 14” “41? Look at the bottom, it’s page 14.”

Andien: “Hah, gak kok,dari sini keliatan 41.” “Hah, no, it’s not. It seems like 41 from here.”

Sheila: “Itu kamu lihatnya kebalik dari atas. Coba dari depan!” “You see it upside down. See it from the front side!” {Andien flips over her book, then smiles, and opens the page as instructed.}

Data no. 4 situates that early childhood has been able to acknowledge numbers and the amount of objects. However, the number is no more than two digits. To say numbers that are more than twenty, the teacher (Ustadzah Vio) excluded the tens and directly said number per number. The argumentation strategy used at the beginning was representative, which is showing and naming the numbers of something. If it is incorrect, the disciples will do control. Once more, there was a different control strategy between the boys and girls. The girls tended to protest and even gave suggestions than the boys did. The boys tended to directly blame and prohibit.

3.2.3 Strategy of Comparison Argumentation

The boys and girls in early childhood are able to giving arguments comparing something to another. The comparison argumentation is performed using the representative and control strategies.

In terms of comparison argumentation (see diagram 5), the girls outperformed the boys, either using the control strategy or the representative strategy. The control strategy is performed by comparing something that is meant to oppose the arguments of the interlocutors. In this situation, the girls were more responsive to oppose the interlocutors’ arguments when they recognized something compared to another and it is contradictory. Representatively, the comparison argumentation refers to detail explanation about something. In this term, the girls were more detail in comparing something. Description of this argument strategy can be viewed in data below.

Diagram 5: Pragmatic Strategy for Comparison Argumentation Type

(Data No. 18)

Learning about color

[Ust Yani: “Teman-teman, hari ini kita akan belajar mengenal warna! Coba siapa yang suka warna ungu?” “Friends, today we will learn about colors! Who likes purple?”]
Zafran: “Aku suka warna biru aku cowok”
{menunjukkan mainan bus warna biru}
“I like blue, because I’m a boy.”
{Showing a blue-colored bus toy}
Mila: “Aku warna ungu kan aku cewek”
{sambil menunjukkan bajunya berwarna ungu}
“I like purple, because I’m a girl.”
{Showing her purple-colored shirt}
Sheila: “Kirana pinjemin yang warna biru!
Kamu ini warna ungu aja buat cewek!”
{memberikan pensil warna biru ke Zafran}
“Kirana, lend me the blue color! You get the purple one, it’s for girls!”
{Giving the blue-colored pencil to Zafran}

In mentioning opinion from someone considered an expert, early childhood often only remembers a half of the sayings. In this case, when their friends incompletely give opinion based on the expert who is accepted in their memories, those who know the information completely will complete it and even ask the expert to complete it. It is illustrated in the following data.
(Data no.32)
Mila: “Aku gak mau ke dokter gigi, nanti gigiku dibelah-belah.”
“I don’t want to visit the dentist, he will cut my teeth.”
Syafik: “Kenapa gigi kamu sakit?”
“Why? Do you get toothache?”
Mila: “Nggak gigi aku sehat soalnya aku rajin berdoa”
“No, I don’t. my teeth are fine because I always pray.”
Syafik: “Ih masa berdoa aja ya, apa iya ya ust? Gigi nya gak sakit ya, karena rajin gosok gigi.”
“Is it so? Can we just pray for our teeth, Ust? We don’t get toothache because we always brush our teeth.”
Ust Yani: “Betul mas Syafiq kalo kita rajin gosok gigi, gigi kita gak sakit. Mungkin maksud Mbak mila, berdoa sebelum gosok gigi ya?”
“That’s correct, Mas Syafik. If we always brush our teeth, we will not get toothache. Maybe what Mbak Mila meant is praying before brushing her teeth, isn’t it?”
Mila: “Iya ust”
“Yes, it is, Ust.”

3.2.4 Strategy of Expert Opinion Argumentation

The boys and girls have been able to argue by mentioning an expert opinion that is considered has knowledge and authority. Both were equal in giving the arguments of expert opinion. Early childhood mentions the sayings from parents, teachers, and adults around them who are considered know more about something.
Data (32) illustrates a situation when a girl named Mila explained that she did not want to visit the dentist because she was afraid to get a tooth medical check. Mila stated that her teeth were fine because she prayed diligently. Her boy friend named Syafiq responded that her argument was peculiar. As far as Syafiq knew, toothache is caused by the laziness to brush teeth. Syafiq then asked the teacher’s consideration about his opinion. The teacher then corrected his arguments. In this context, the teacher is the expert who strengthens Syafiq’s statement. The teacher also fixed Mila’s opinion which was half-accepted. The teacher understood that Mila gave her opinions based on what she received all this time, that as the God’s servants, we have to always pray before starting any activities. The teacher the completed the information about what it is meant to pray before brushing teeth. Mila then confirmed the teacher’s statement and realized that the expert opinion argumentation she mentioned was not complete.

3.2.5 Strategy of Analogy Argumentation

In the case of analogy argumentation, the boys and girls implemented the representative strategy, which was explaining, such as Major Premise: Generally, Case C1 is similar to case C2. Minor Premise: Proposition A is true (false) in Case C1. Conclusion: Proposition A is true (false) in case C2. The boys often used an analogy of something than the girls did (diagram 7). The description of this strategy will be explain by data below.

![Diagram 7: Pragmatic Strategy for Analogy Argumentation](image)

(Data no.7)


“Alright. Keep it, please.”

Data (7) shows that Ais, a girl, responded the teacher’s statement about today’s raining. The major premise = It is raining today. Minor premise = to stay dry, use an umbrella. Conclusion = I bring an umbrella today. Ais’s analogy stated that if it is raining then we have to bring an umbrella. An interesting thing occurs because girls tend to be more simple and add a feature of something in analogizing something. Ais stated that it is raining today and I bring an umbrella, then added with a new adjective to explain that the umbrella was just bought in the market.

(Data No.49)


“This is mine! Colorful but ugly.”

[Brian]: “Punya Cello singanya luca pake kacamata.”

“Cello’s lion is adorable and wearing a pair of eyeglasses.”

[Nadif]: “Anak kecil gak boleh ngomong kaya gitu dosa.”

“Children are prohibited to talk such things, it is sinful.”

[Nadif]: “Ah kaya kamu ustazah saja.”

“Ah, you’re just like ustazah.”

[Brian]: “Kalo kamu berbuat dosa kamu masuk neraka, air susunya darah.”

“If you commit sins, you’ll be in the hell, the milk is blood.”

[Nadif]: “Ah kamu sukanya ngomong dosa-dosa terus.”

“Ah, you keep talking about sins.”

Data (49) shows a similar thing to data (7). Early childhood children are able to analogize something by detailing the conclusion aspect. Data (49) shows something different, where the boys tend to be complex in analogizing something. Nadif analogized living creatures that are close each other means they have romantic relationships. Brian then reminded him using the analogy of major premise = talking about dating is a sin; minor premise = children avoid sinful
talks; conclusion = children avoid dating talks because it is sinful. Nadif responded using the analogy of major premise = Ustadzah (the teacher) is someone who often reminds about sinful acts; minor premise = Brian talks about sins; conclusion = Brian is like ustadzah. Getting such response, Brian emphasized his arguments by uttering the major premise = human commit sins and he will be dragged into the hell where the milk is from blood; minor premise = Nadif has committed sin; conclusion = Nadif will be dragged to hell if he commits sins. The data (49) model shows that the boys were able to express analogy arguments and respond an analogy with an analogy, then answer it with more detail analogy.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study show that boys and girls have capability to give argument in daily conversation. There are differences of argument uses in boys and girls. The differences can be seen from the frequency intensity of argument types uttered by them as well as from the pragmatic strategy in the intention stating. The girls have greater ability in qualitative and comparison-typed arguments. On the other side, the boys are more superior in the analogy-typed arguments. Both the boys and girls have equal abilities in the expert opinion and quantity-typed arguments. In the implementation of the pragmatic strategy, the boys applied the representative strategy more than the girls. In contrast, the girls are more skilled in giving arguments using the control, expressive, and social strategies than the boys.

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