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Quality Of Arguments Used In The First-Round Presidential Debate: Critical Pragmatics And Stephen Toulmin's Perspective

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Abstract: It is important for politicians to have a good argumentative skill. For state leaders, the ability to think logically, to use rhetoric, and to argue systematically, scientifically, sharply, and eloquently is very crucial. The year 2019 is the political year for Indonesia. Political campaigns leading to the presidential and the legislative election, both in national and regional levels, will happen in 2019. The focus of this research is to investigate the depth and breadth of the arguments stated by the presidential candidates and how those arguments are presented. The research substantial data source is in the form of speech transcript of the recorded video of the first-round presidential debate by two pairs of president and vice-president candidates. The research data were the debate arguments found in the video transcript and the contexts surrounding them. The data gathering method used observation by employing recording and note-taking techniques. After the data were gathered, they were selected and classified based on their types for further analysis. The analysis method was distributional method and content analysis. Both data analysis methods were applied to yield significant results of the study. The results showed that there are simple patterns of argument consisting claim, subclaim, data, and warrant. The orders of elements of arguments might be varied. The research results also showed that there were various pragmatic meanings found in the arguments used by the president and vice-president candidates. The results of the study which was analyzed using the critical pragmatic perspective reflect how far the candidates were concerned with the marginalized, the underprivileged, and the subjugated people.

Index Terms: Critical pragmatics, political argumentation, presidential debate

I. INTRODUCTION

The linguistic and non-linguistic studies of speeches delivered by political leaders in advanced countries have been widely conducted (1). This study is important because studies on the substance and language of the speeches will be beneficial for educational and research purposes. Such academic studies should be separated from political dimensions because the study is purely intended for academic purposes, as in education and research (2). In Indonesia, a study on the discourses has not been widely conducted. As a matter of fact, political views put forth by the politicians contained in the discourses are very beneficial for learners and scientists. For this purpose, this

article is written so that it can be read by a wider audience. Like the writers in the advanced countries, this article is free from political bias and alignments with the politicians featured in the discourses being analyzed. Specifically, this article only focuses on the spoken argumentative discourses presented by the presidential candidates in the debate in 2019. Due to some limitations, the argumentative discourses used as the source of research substantive data are limited to the first-round of the presidential debate. The debate's argumentative discourse in other rounds are treated as being outside of the scope of this article writing.

The purpose of the research is to find out the extent to which these Toulmin's model of argument (3) is applied by the presidential candidates to build arguments in the first round of the presidential debate. Furthermore, this research is also intended to determine the extent to which the presidential candidates and their running mates take sides with the marginalized people in the broadest sense through the first round of presidential debate.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretically, two main theories are used in this research. The first theory is the pragmatics in relation with contexts. The second theory is the model of argument proposed by Toulmin (4). The two theories are used as the frame of reference and as the analytical tool to carry out this research. It needs to be clarified that pragmatics is the study of language with the objects in question being outside the language (5). Experts argue that pragmatics is the study of speaker's intention. The instruments used to conduct a pragmatic analysis is context, especially situational contexts. Context is understood as the background knowledge shared by the interlocutors (6), (7).

Understanding of the right and correct contexts will allow one to draw meaning from the right context. On the contrary, insufficient understanding of the substance of context results in imperfect interpretation of the utterance. Even worse, it can stray from its intended meaning. Therefore, the argumentative discourses spoken by the presidential candidates in the debate must be interpreted correctly and profoundly.

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716

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