# READING THE ARGUMENT
# AS ASSESSMENT PROCESS INDONESIAN OPINION TEXT

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***Abstract***
*The development of opinion text assessment at this time was very rapid until a computer-based assessment emerged. In this kind of assessment, the emphasis is on seeing the tendency of the number of positive and negative words in the text. In fact, the main element of opinion text is the argument. This research seeks to deepen the linguistic process in opinion assessment before it can later proceed towards computer-based assessment. The analysis offered is the use of the theory of reading evaluation which is applied with the Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) and Toulmin's argument theory. These steps are able to make the findings of the author's argument more accurate than just looking for positive and negative words in the text.*
***Keywords:*** *Argument; Opinion; Reading Evaluation; RST; Toulmin's argument*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Opinion is one genre of text. Opinions are found in many newspapers or magazines. In Indonesia, writing Indonesian opinion is also one of the language skills that must be practiced by high school students in class XII (Suryaman, 2018). In addition, writing opinions is also a task for test participants on language proficiency tests in order to test their writing skills. The evaluation of writing, both opinion texts and other types of texts, is generally done manually. Nevertheless, over the times, computer-based writing assessments have also been developed. An automated essay grading procedure that is used successfully in evaluating writing and widely used in the United States is the e-rater system. E-rater is used for scoring large-scale writing tests, and even acts as a second assessor for TOEFL iBT (Burstein, 2003 in Shermis 2010). This software is able to analyze the syntactic features of essays, word lengths and texts, as well as vocabulary.

Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) is also an automatic writing evaluation engine that has been implemented to support formative assessment in learning. AWE uses natural language processing (NLP), machine learning, or other computational methods in text analysis that can provide written quality scores and qualitative feedback on grammatical, mechanical, style, discourse, and organizational aspects (Ware, 2011 in Ranalli, 2016).

The development of manual text assessment that has the potential to be upgraded to computer-based is in line with Neal's opinion that unconsciously, there are technological forces that influence culture until the time of writing appraisal reform. These reforms frame assessments in digital or computational technology (Harrington, 2011).

In Indonesia, research on computer-based opinion assessment generally only takes the form of classifying opinions. In general, this classification is carried out to support economic and political interests. Economic interests, for example, in the marketing of products through advertisements that use sentences in the form of certain opinions. Public interest in the product can be analyzed through the opinions listed in these advertisements. Conversely, people's interest in certain products can also be analyzed through their opinions about the product or product advertising. Political interests, for example in terms of expressing opinions on social media (social media), such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Expressions of opinion or political attitudes from the users of social media are forms of opinion that can be further analyzed into categories of positive and negative opinion.

An example of research on the classification of opinions is research conducted on a government-owned twitter account as feedback on the results of government performance. Hundreds or even thousands of Twitter entries require systematic evaluation, no longer manual. Therefore, the researcher seeks to classify public opinion on Twitter using machine learning and sentiment analysis. The result is in the form of positive and negative chit classification (Faradillah, 2016). Another example is opinion classification research by exploring these opinions using sentiment analysis so that the polarity is found, in a positive or negative direction (Liu, 2012).

The two studies above examine opinions computationally using sentiment analysis. From the research on the assessment of computer-based opinion it appears that language and technology are closely related. Language at one time formed an opinion and was used as a tool to express opinions with a variety of objectives, which on a large scale, to analyze it faster needed computational technology. However, the classification of opinions in the above studies is generally not based on a comprehensive linguistic analysis, but only using the classification of positive and negative words and comparing the frequency of occurrence of both in the text.

This study seeks to examine the linguistic steps in the development of Indonesian opinion text assessment instruments, especially in terms of evaluating arguments in the writer's opinion. The problems in this study are (1) how to stage the assessment of the text of opinion opinions; (2) how to determine the arguments in the opinion text; and (3) how to determine the direction of the argument in the opinion text. This third point is a point that has also been done in previous studies. It's just that in this study the stage will go through synthesis with other linguistic theories.

The purpose of this research is to produce an opinion text assessment model that can be used, both by Indonesian language teachers and writing test assessors. It is hoped that the results of this study can also be utilized to be developed into online or remote system tests, of course using computational theories to maximize it.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Opinion is defined as 'views, judgments, or judgments formed in the mind about a certain thing' (Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary). An opinion is formed by the life experience of someone who expresses it. Statements or views (ways of thinking about something) are expressed in opinion texts in the form of opinions or arguments. Therefore, the opinion text is an argumentative text.

Ramage and Bean (Ramage and Bean, 1992) argue that the component of argument that is always contained in an argument is always in a persuasive framework because it emphasizes the discovery and delivery of judgment about a reality through an approach in the form of reasons. As for Andrews (Andrews, 2014, p. 2), looking at arguments as everyday terms that mostly refer to products or manifestations of arguments, such as debates, essays, research papers, and dissertations. Arguments also belong to a wider variety of forms in oral, written and other modes, for example, visual and spatial.

The term argumentative text refers to the genre or category of the text. A genre is a grouping of shared texts, representing the language of the author expressed in the same and repeated situations. Each genre has a number of features that make it different from other genres: each has a specific purpose, an overall structure, certain linguistic features, and is shared by members of the culture. Genre is an intuitively interesting concept that helps organize the thoughts we use to categorize the text and the situations in which it appears. The concept of genre is based on the idea that readers usually have difficulty recognizing similarities in text. It was used as a recurring experience so that it was easier to read, understand, and write the texts.

Genres contain the form and function of writing. Based on the form, for example a letter, report, or essay, while based on the communicative function of discourse, such as narration, description, exposition, argumentation (Weigle, 2002). Meanwhile, Johnstone (2002) also believes that texts are material in the study of discourse. Text as material that is studied in the discourse always has a connection, both intercultural and contextual. That is an important characteristic of a discourse. The linkage is formulated into seven textual criteria, which are called the seven elements of discourse, developed by D'beaugrande, namely cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, intertextuality. The seven criteria become mandatory principles (constitutive principles) in the discourse. Two of the seven criteria, namely cohesion and coherence, are used by Mitkov (2010) in applying Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) to analyze argumentative texts computationally.

Mitkov (2010) quotes the Longman dictionary, that discourse contains an 'official' context. That means that the resulting text is not a collection of symbols or words that are random, but are interrelated and contain meaningful sentences that have certain communicative purposes. References to 'related' and 'meaningful' relate to the fact that discourse is expected to be cohesive and coherent (Clark, Alexander; Fox, Christ; Lappin, 2010, p. 600).

Based on ideas inherited from structuralism and implicit in Noam Chomsky's Transformational Grammar, texts are autonomous objects that can be analyzed and explained independently of a particular context, writer, or reader. Text has a structure in the form of arrangement of words, clauses and sentences, and by following the rules of grammar, the writer can encode the full semantic representation of the intended meaning (Hyland, 2009, p. 8). However, the idea that texts can function independently of context carries important ideological implications. One is the view that humans communicate by transferring ideas or ideas from one mind to another through language (Shannon and Weaver, 1963) in (Hyland, 2009). The idea that forms the function of expressing and varying according to context is the central idea of discourse analysis and supports the existence of genre (Hyland, 2009, p. 15). From the explanation above, it can be said that writing an opinion means producing an argumentative text or discourse with content in the form of a belief, statement, or way of thinking about something. In expressing opinions, the writer is more or less influenced by his life experience.

Referring to one of the ways to conduct an assessment according to Nurgiyantoro (Nurgiyantoro, 2011) is the application of structured observation. Structured observation referred to in the context of this study is exploring the opinion text through observation in a reading framework for evaluating. Hayes (Weigle, 2002) suggests the concept of reading evaluation or reading with assessment, namely that when someone reads the text with the aim of evaluating, he will evaluate the text he reads. He arranged the stages in reading the evaluation indeed within the framework of writing assessment. In the evaluation process, there are stages as stated in the following diagram (Hayes in Wigle (Weigle, 2002)).
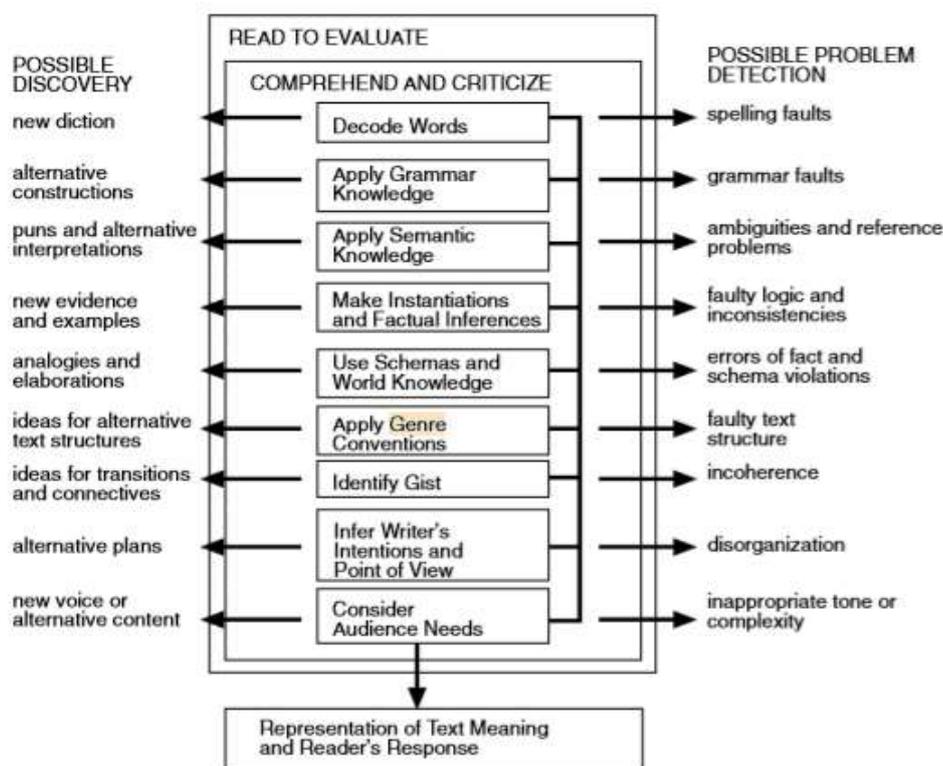


Diagram 1: Hayes's Evaluation Reading

In Weigle's explanation, it is said that the writer reads the text critically to detect possible problems and find potential improvements. Critical reading is done by applying the steps in the diagram. Hayes's diagram shows the cognitive processes involved in reading as follows. The diagram above can be applied in this research, especially in the sixth step until the end. In step six, the reader applies genre accuracy. In this case he can find ideas in the structure of the text or precisely the structure of the text errors. Then, step seven, the reader identifies the core and can find ideas for transitions and connections between sentences / paragraphs, or it can also find incoherence. Next, the reader concludes the writer's

purpose and point of view so that he can find alternative plans from the written topic, but can also find the absence of writing organizations. Finally, the reader can judge whether the writing is in accordance with the needs of the reader. In this case, he can find new things or alternative content that suits the needs of readers or precisely the flow or complexity that is not appropriate.

Opinion as one type of argumentative genre text cannot be analyzed regardless of the accompanying context. It is assumed by researchers that at first they viewed texts as forms that could be analyzed independently of their use in real life. However, there are other ways of seeing writing as "material artifacts" outside the surface structure. That is seeing opinion texts as discourse. In this case the writer of the text is considered to have certain goals and intentions. Different from the form that does not depend on the context, discourse "approach" sees the text as part of social action. Assessment in this context views the text really functions as communication by linking the forms of language with purpose and context. In this case, the linguistic pattern of the text points to contexts outside the text, implying various social constraints and author's choices in various goals and situations. The author, who has certain goals and intentions, certain relationships with his readers, and certain information to be conveyed, uses the content of the text as a resource to achieve it. These factors draw the analyst into a broader perspective that places the text in communicative goals and social action, identifying ways in which the text truly functions as communication. Thus, the text becomes able to become a communication tool with the presence of discourse elements so that the discourse seems to give life to a text. He makes the text alive and meaningful for the reader.

The whole opinion assessment cannot be separated from the context of discourse analysis conducted in the framework of tracing the writer's arguments. As an argumentative discourse, the opinion text contains the argument of the author. Opinion as an argumentative text means that opinion is a text that contains an argumentation argument. Toulmin (Toulmin, 2003) suggests that the argument was originally sparked by Aristotle. Aristotle saw the argument as a logical perspective or mathematical logic, which is related to the way of thinking, thinking, and inferring. In this case, what matters is the way of giving reasons that determine the validity of the argument arranged in the form of three statements in one unit, namely the major premise, minor premise, and conclusion. However, according to Toulmin's argument (Toulmin, 2003) has a certain pattern and this always appears in a text of argumentation, both oral and written. He observed that in every action expressing an opinion or argument always contained claims of truth (claim (C)). This claim is in the form of a conclusion or statement of the thesis that was raised and is believed to be true by the author. The claim is central in the text. In a process of argumentation, both oral and written, the claim will always be clarified and maintained by the speaker or writer. Efforts to clarify and maintain this claim will succeed if supported by data (D) or the basis of evidence to strengthen the claim. If there is not enough evidence to support the claim, a guarantee or warrant (W) can be presented. Warrant is a statement that connects a claim with data. Although the presence of claims, data, and warrant an argument can be said to be well structured, sometimes warrant needs to be supported by evidence as well. Evidence supporting this warrant is called backing (B). In addition, when a claim is a condition that contains certain possibilities, a qualifier (Q) can then appear. Renkema (2004: 204) calls qualifiers a condition. Furthermore, rebuttal (R) can also appear, ie rejection or exclusion. The parts of the arguments mentioned above can form a pattern, namely C-D-W-B-Q-R or at least a C-D pattern, which is a claim and one or more data.

In constructing the argument, after the claim is found, Toulmin applies questions to find the elements of the D-W-B-Q-R argument. Claims are questioned, why such claims arise, to find data. data. After the data is obtained, the question is raised as a claim booster and which links the data with the claim. Then, a warrant arose which was then questioned again, namely what was the background of the appearance of the warrant. The answer is backing. Up to the position of C-D-W-B, the pattern of arguments formed is support for C. However, when a conflicting condition arises, then there appears a rebuttal, which is generally required by the qualifier. The appearance of both can make claims rejected or even stronger. As a complement to Toulmin's theory, there is also the role of RST. One of the ways in which RST works is by dominating the structure of the nucleus and the satellite. RST is used to describe relationships between clauses in a text, regardless of grammatical or lexical views. As such, RST is useful for connecting conjunctions, grammar, clauses and connects, and parataxis (Mann & Thompson, 1987).

In this study, the last five stages in the Hayes Diagram are also in line with the application of the six Toulmin arguments in an opinion text. The following chart illustrates the six elements of Toulmin's argument which are interconnected.
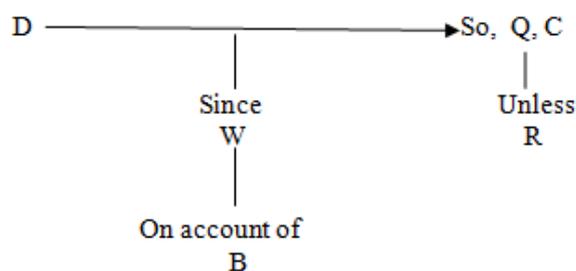


Diagram 2: Toulmin Argument Pattern

The application of Toulmin's Argument Pattern must be preceded by the RST theory, namely in determining the subject discussed in the text using TextTilling. The purpose of TextTiling is to partition the text into adjacent, non-overlapping subtopic segments, which are assumed to occur within the scope of one or more main topics, as long as the text is intact. This method uses the following provisions: (1) words that often appear throughout the text, which often indicate the main topic; (2) words that are less frequent but more uniform in distribution, which do not provide much information about the divisions between discussions; (3) groups of words that are 'clustered' together with high density in some parts of the text and low density in other parts. This group of words denotes a subtopic structure.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that an important component in the assessment of opinion texts is the existence of well-structured arguments, both supportive and opposing, that have clear objectives according to the topic of the writing. For this reason, this research used a qualitative method with the intention of digging deeper into the meaning of opinion texts to capture the elements of argument in the text. Creswell (1994) revealed that one of the characteristics of qualitative research was that it was carried out because of the need to explore the phenomenon. The qualitative method according to Moleong (2002) has a research procedure using a natural setting to interpret existing phenomena and one of them is by utilizing documents. In the case of this research, the document referred to as data is the text of opinion from the mass media.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

In a text titled "Kambing Hitam Banjir Jakarta", the application of tetralin is carried out to find the main subject or topic in the text, which is the word government. The findings lead to the stage of searching for elements of Toulmin's argument, namely sentences containing elements of the word government. In addition, in finding a Claim, researchers look for sentences in which there are words 'because' or words that mean the same as 'because'. The clause after the word 'because' it is Data. Data obtained by questioning, why such claims arise. Claim: The failure of the flood control program in the Capital City last week signals the poor management of all levels of government, both central and regional. Claims were rearranged into the flood control program in the Capital City last week failed (due to) poor management of all levels of government, *both central and regional*. Then, obtained Data and Claim.

Warrant reinforces the truth of Claims and Data by paraphrasing Claims and Data: Because the management of all levels of government, both central and regional, is bad, the flood control program in the Capital City last week failed. Backing is found by looking for sentences that are the background of warrant, that is the problem is the coordination of the central and regional governments that have no way. Qualifiers are found by looking for sentences in the form of arguments (writers) that are antithetical or are an exception to other arguments.

Qualifiers in this research data are public officials need to make a breakthrough that can go beyond the barriers of central and local government authority. The existence of Qualifier allows the emergence of Rebuttal, in the opposite condition, which has been required by Qualifier: Unfortunately,

that does not happen because we are more busy looking for a patsy every time a flood comes. The emergence of Q and R can make Claims rejected or even stronger. In the example sentence above, it appears that R amplifies C.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The application of RST theory that precedes the application of Toulmin's argument theory makes it easy for the assessor to grasp the arguments of the author. This kind of assessment is very effective because it is relatively more objective than without the application of any theory and only sees the frequency of positive or negative words that appear as has been done so far or only with one theory, the theory of Toulmin's argument. For future development, this research can be continued with a computer-based assessment model. In addition to making the assessment more objective, it will also accelerate the assessment process, especially if applied to opinion writing tests.

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