

ISCAR SUMMER SCHOOL

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Climbing on Piaget’s shoulders to look beyond with a cultural-historical perspective: Argumentation as a situated activity in young children. Insights from the empirical study of their inferences.¹

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Example collected in 2013, during a phase of collection of a pre-corpus of the ArgImp Project. This example has been discussed in this publication:

Perret-Clermont, A.-N., Breux, S., Greco, S., and Miserez-Caperos, C. (2014). Children and knowledge-oriented argumentation. Some notes for future research. In G. Gobber and A. Rocci (Eds.), *Language, reason and education: Studies in honor of Eddo Rigotti* (pp. 259-277). Bern: Peter Lang.

In this particular conversation, a child aged six, whom we will call G., is talking to his mother in an informal family setting. Some days before this conversation, the child had visited a museum ship at the Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia “Leonardo da Vinci” in Milan, Italy. The museum ship is an old submarine, named Enrico Toti after an Italian war hero. The child’s mother did not go with him to this museum. The visit to the museum included a guided tour. Among other things, they were informed that the Toti had originally been laid down in 1967, thus after the end of the Second World War; and that its primary function was surveillance of Italian territorial waters. These two aspects will be important for our example.

While speaking to his mother in order to describe the visit to the Toti to her, the child seemed puzzled about what he had heard from the lady giving the guided tour. He commented:

“But the lady said that the Toti had to go around and control enemies. But *what enemies* – if the war was over?”

(A) Analytic overview of argumentation

1 There must be some explanation for the lady’s use of “enemies” at the guided tour (and it is reasonable to ask for it)

1.1 (because) the lady has not used “enemies” appropriately

1.1.1a Because she said that the Toti had to control enemies;

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1.1.1b But she also said that the war was over

(1.1.1c And enemies only exist in wartime)

(B) Analysis with the Argumentum Model of Topics

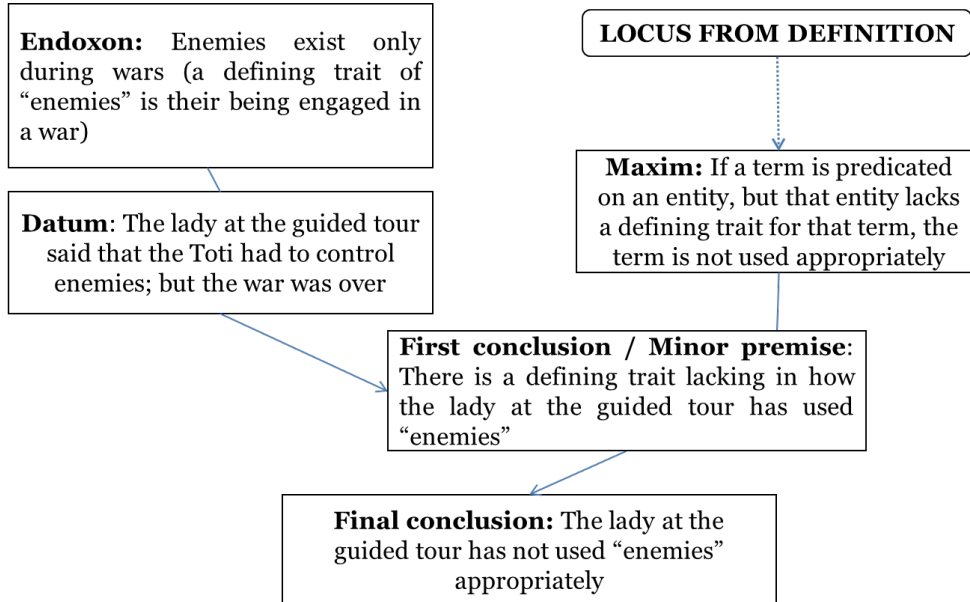


Figure 1: AMT representation of the child's argumentation, step 1

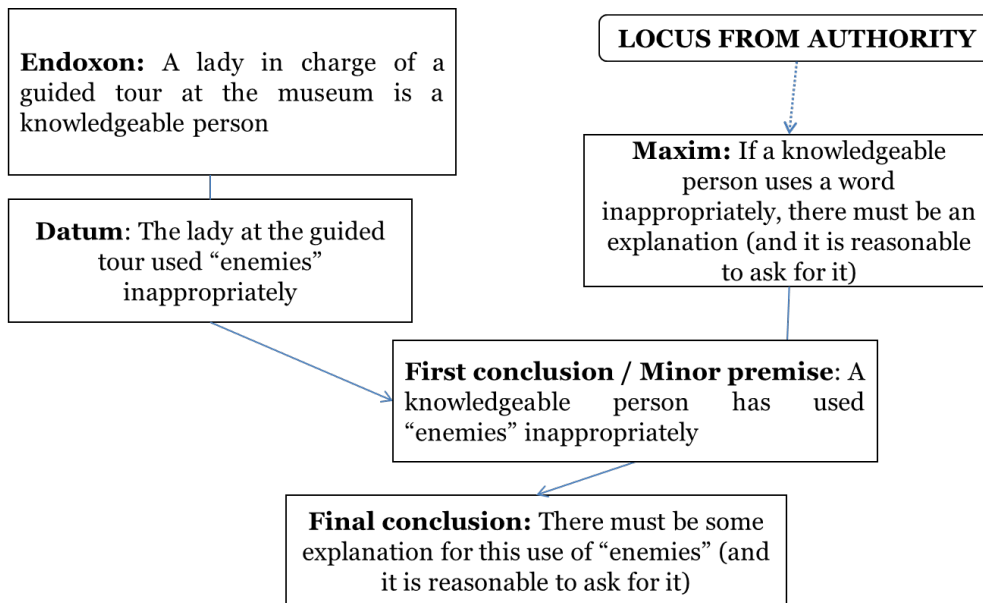


Figure 2: AMT representation of the child's argumentation, step 2

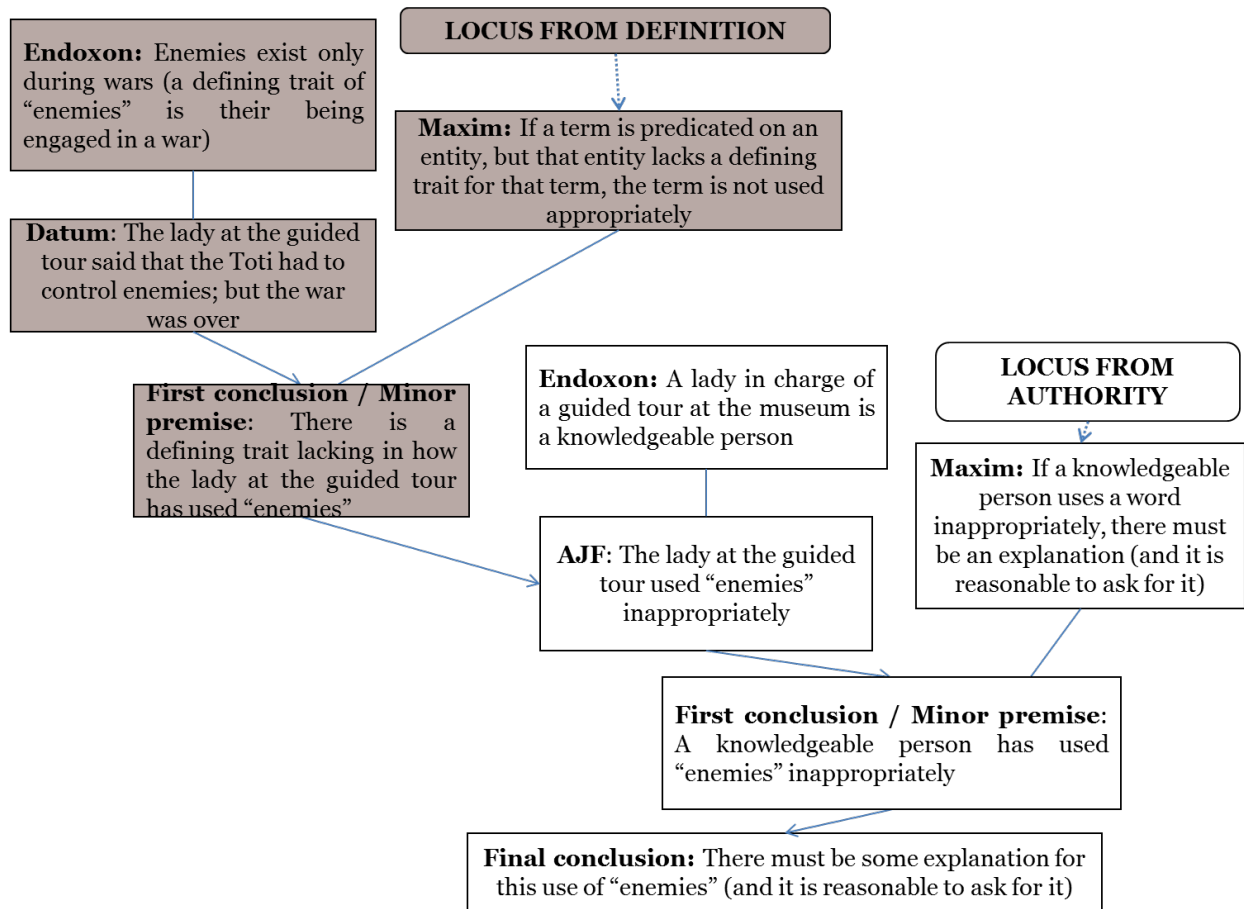


Figure 3: Intertwining between the two steps in figures 1 and 2: complete AMT reconstruction

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