



# Teacher Talk: A Pragmatic Analysis of Presupposition in English Teaching Classroom

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**Abstract.** The main focus of this study is a pragmatic analysis of presuppositions. It investigates the English instructor of university students at one of Indonesia's universities. In this qualitative study, the teacher's statements throughout two sessions of teaching-learning activity served as the source of the data. Data were analyzed by using Yule's proposed model analysis (1996). The categories are Lexical Presupposition, Structural Presupposition, Counter Factual Presupposition, Factive Presupposition, Non-Factive Presupposition, and Existential Presupposition. The findings show that the English teacher employed a variety of presuppositions. Structural Presupposition and Counter Factual Presupposition are the most frequently used type of presupposition. It could be said that in the English teaching-learning activity, the teacher primarily used WH questions to communicate the material and rarely used whether conditions to explain it to the students. The research also analyzed the utterances' suggested meanings in addition to categorizing the presuppositions in the teacher's utterances.

**Keywords:** Discourse analysis · English language teaching · pragmatics · presupposition · teacher talk

## 1 Introduction

Communication is the process of conveying thoughts and feelings or providing information to another. There are at least two people and two processes involved in communication. The listeners and the speaker are participants, and the procedures are speaking and listening. When they speak, individuals position their thoughts into expressions, discussing views, feelings, and intentions that they want others to understand. When they listen, they convert words into concepts, attempting to rebuild the perceptions, sentiments, and purposes they wish to comprehend [1]. In its basic form, communication is transmitting messages from the speaker to the hearer via voice. To communicate effectively, all participants must grasp one other's thoughts, emotions, perceptions, and purposes.

In a discussion, when a speaker thinks that the listener already knows something, the information may not emerge immediately. Because obtaining the implied meaning is

complex, the listener must seek the meaning of the words and what the speaker intends to say in a similar situation. Furthermore, acquiring the correct interpretation of meaning is done by assumption. Similarly, Yule [2] defined pragmatics as a study of interpretation as expressed by a speaker and perceived by a listener. The speaker's perspective is sometimes implicit and ambiguous. As a result, the listeners are unable to distinguish specific details from the speaker. To comprehend the speaker's utterances, listeners must evaluate the circumstances in which the speaker utilizes the utterances.

Something is presumed to be accurate in a phrase that claims additional facts. This is known as presupposition. Presupposition is something that is assumed, whereas presupposes would be to presume something factual, yet lacking evidence. This may emerge in both verbal and nonverbal language, not just in regular communication [3, 4] but also in cinematic dialogue [5, 6]. Many people are drawn to a movie because of its language. The characters' usage of presuppositions must be suitable in order for the viewer to comprehend them.

Presuppositions must be acknowledged or assumed by both the speaker and listener for the circumstances of the discourse to be comprehended. In order to be suitable, a sentence's assumption must generally be part of the context's common ground. To grasp the meaning of a statement, the context of utterances must be considered. Yule [2] defines context as "the situation surrounding or preceding the utterance production." Holmes [7] characterizes context as having four aspects: participants, setting, topics, and function. An utterance may be thoroughly evaluated by taking these four components into account. Yule [2] confirmed that a presupposition is something that the speaker considers to be true before making an utterance. It refers to how individuals might depict the practice of cognition in the study of some components of intangible meaning. In other words, how may listeners gain information other than their understanding? Yule [2] also categorizes presuppositions into six types: existential, factive, lexical, structural, counter-factual, and non-factive.

Many academics performed their studies by analyzing the assumptions made by the actors in the movie. On the opposite, the authors of the current study would like to emphasize investigating the presupposition used in teacher talk when presenting the subject. Teacher talk (TT) refers to the language used by the teacher to instruct students in the classroom [8]. Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics defines this phrase as that variation of language occasionally employed by teachers while teaching a foreign language, such as English. Teachers frequently compress their speech to interact with students, providing it with many attributes of foreigner talk and other condensed forms of speech directed to language learners" [9, 10]. Thus, teachers' utterances, interactions, and expressions in the classroom must be clear, relevant, and pertinent to the level of students [11].

Besides that, some factors encouraged the authors to examine the English teacher's talk. Firstly, this issue must be thoroughly examined to achieve a comprehensive understanding between the teacher and the students to achieve successful interaction among them. Students should first comprehend the presupposition from the teacher's statements. Secondly, a presupposition or assumption is something that the teacher intends to accomplish before expressing anything. Lastly, the authors expect that this present study will contribute to the study of presuppositions. It is supported by Bolitho [12]. He

argued that there are several interpretations of teacher-talk. Therefore, this kind of study is urgently required.

As previously indicated, the authors aim to examine presuppositions in teacher's utterances. In addition, responses to the following questions are undertaken:

- 1) What types of presuppositions are utilized in the teacher's utterances in teaching and learning activities?
- 2) What are the implied meanings of teachers' utterances in teaching and learning activities?

## 2 Methods

The authors adopted a descriptive qualitative design to address the study questions. The information was collected throughout the teaching and learning process in one general English class at one of the universities in Indonesia. The first-year university students who took the subject were selected to participate in this current research. They were categorized as English beginners, as indicated by their English proficiency. The class consisted of one English teacher and 35 students. The students were from the English department of the university.

Two sessions of the English class were videotaped by the authors. Each meeting lasts around two and a half hours. In the first meeting, the English teacher taught a recount text material, and a narrative text was the material in the second meeting. While collecting data, the authors were non-participant observers; thus, they did not participate in the teaching-learning activity. Yule's [2] categories were used to examine the data. Existential Presupposition, Factive Presupposition, Non-Factive Presupposition, Lexical Presupposition, Structural Presupposition, and Counter Factual Presupposition are the six categories of presupposition. The authors devised the following data analysis technique during data collection: identifying presupposition types and evaluating the presupposition interpretation.

## 3 Results and Discussion

### 3.1 The Types of Presupposition Used in the Teacher's Utterances in a Teaching-Learning Process

Based on the data analysis, the teaching-learning process encompasses all six categories of Yule's [2] presuppositions. Existential Presupposition, Factive Presupposition, Non-Factive Presupposition, Lexical Presupposition, Structural Presupposition, and Counter-Factual Presupposition are the six forms of presupposition. The table below presents the total number of presuppositions employed by the English teacher during the activity of teaching and learning in the classroom:

According to the Table 1, all forms of presuppositions may be found in teachers' utterances. Structural Presupposition is the most utilized form of presupposition, accounting for 126 of the 364 datasets. It can also be noted that Structural Presupposition accounts for

**Table 1.** The Frequency of Presupposition Used by English Teacher in The Teaching-Learning Process

No.	Types of Presupposition	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Existential Presupposition	70	19.23%
2.	Factive Presupposition	56	15.38%
3.	Non-Factive Presupposition	35	9.62%
4.	Lexical Presupposition	70	19.23%
5.	Structural Presupposition	126	34.62%
6.	Counter Factual Presupposition	7	1.92%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>364</b>	<b>100%</b>

34.62% of the presuppositions employed by the English teacher. It indicates that Structural Presupposition is the most common sort of presupposition employed by English teacher while delivering material.

The Lexical Presupposition and Existential Preposition are the second most frequent types of presuppositions. They have a comparable number in 70 data out of 364 data, demonstrating that they both contribute 19.23% to the data results. The Factive Presupposition is the third type of presupposition used by the English teacher. This presupposition contains 56 data points out of 364 overall, accounting for 15.38% of the data results. Non-Factive Presupposition is the fourth form of presupposition, accounting for 35 of the 364 data points. It can also be noted that Non-Factive Presupposition accounts for 9.62% of the presuppositions employed by the English teacher.

The Counter Factual Presupposition is the least common sort of presupposition seen in teacher's utterances. It only contains 7 data points out of 364 total. It can also be noted that Counter Factual Presupposition accounts for just 1.92% of the presuppositions employed by the English teacher. It suggests that the English teacher performs the smallest number of Counter Factual Presupposition when delivering the material.

### 3.2 The Implied Meanings of Teachers' Utterances in Teaching and Learning Process

Out of the total 364 data of presupposition categories, 126 are Structural Presupposition, 70 are Existential Presupposition and Lexical Presupposition, 56 are Factive Presupposition, 35 are Non-Factive Presupposition, and the remaining 7 are Counter Factual Presupposition. The following is a more detailed description of each sort of assumption seen in teacher utterances:

#### 3.2.1 Structural Presupposition

The most prevalent category of presupposition used by English teacher is a structural presupposition. Specific sentence constructions have been evaluated in this manner as traditionally and routinely assuming that portion of the structure is presumed to be factual

(Yule, 1996). It argues that speakers may utilize such structures to regard information as presupposed (presumed to be factual) and hence have listeners accept it as accurate. A sentence's pragmatic presupposition is the collection of requirements that must be met for the intentional utterance to be suitable in the context or fortuitous [13]. The Structural Presupposition used in the teacher talk discovered when delivering the material will be discussed in this section. The datum can be seen below:

Datum M-1/SP2/00:17:42

*Teacher: ya recount, so what is the difference between recount text and narrative text? Both are telling the activities in the past, right?..... All of the last events have been experienced. What's the difference?*

The circumstance in datum M-1/SP2/00:17:42 occurred when the teacher challenged the students to differentiate between recount and narrative texts. It can be assumed that recount text and narrative text vary. The students were asked to respond and differentiate between the two passages. Furthermore, "what is the difference between recount text and narrative text?" is a Structural Presupposition.

### 3.2.2 Existential Presupposition

The teacher's second most used kind is an existential presupposition. This is known as Existential Presupposition because it assumes the presence of the objects stated by the speaker. The English teacher expresses the Existential Presupposition identified in this study, which will be examined. As can be observed, the datum is as follows:

Datum M-1/EP3/00:00:48

*Teacher: Maybe you look at there is a girl in front of the class. She wants to look at the process of our teaching and learning in the 2B in particular. Thus, she wants to see the activity in our class. So, how about this 2B class, huh?*

The teacher said this while adding facts about a girl (one of the authors) standing in front of the classroom. 'The 2B' was one of the nine first-year classes in the university. It is comprised of 35 students. It certainly existed and became a classroom where the authors documented the activities.

### 3.2.3 Lexical Presupposition

Lexical Presupposition is also the second most common form in teacher talk. The usage of one form with its declared meaning is generally interpreted in this type with the presupposition that another (non-asserted) meaning is recognized. Lexical Presupposition is defined as the idea that the speaker can act as though another meaning (word) will be comprehended by using one term. This section would go over the Lexical Presupposition seen in teacher utterances. The following is the datum of this presupposition:

Datum M-2/LP9/00:07:20

*Teacher: so, mousedeer..... Mousedeer looks like a deer, but it is smaller. Okay, there are pictures. Mousedeer is very smart.*

Those underlined utterances were spoken by the teacher to describe the mousedeer's characteristics. 'Mousedeer looks like a deer, but it is smaller' is similar to describing a

mousedeer's appearance. 'Mousedeer is very smart' can be presupposed that the teacher wanted to tell the students about the mousedeer's quality.

### 3.2.4 Factive Presupposition

The second type of presupposition is the third most common form in a teacher talk. It is known as Factive Presupposition because some phrases in the utterances are employed to express facts, such as know, realize, regret, glad, unusual, and aware [2]. The English teacher conveyed the Factive Presupposition uncovered in this study. The example of the data can be seen in the following:

Datum M-2/FP7/00:13:53

*Teacher: Ya, across the river until inside the river. Yes, alright. .... I am so sorry; today, I forgot to copy the "text" for you. Anyway, i think you can write the text first. Is it okay??*

In this part, the teacher said that she forgot to copy the students the text of the 'Crocodile and Mousedeer' story. It made her feel sorry. Through this information, the teacher indirectly told them that she did not bring them a copy of the text. In addition, she thought that they could write down the text that she would write on the whiteboard.

### 3.2.5 Non-factive Presupposition

The third type of presupposition is the fourth most common form in a teacher talk. It is known as Non-Factive Presupposition, and it is presumed to be false. Verbs such as dream, imagine, and pretend are employed with the presupposition that what follows is false [2]. The English teacher expressed the Non-Factive Presupposition discovered in this study, which was examined in this section. The following datum portrays the instance of this type.

Datum M-1/NFP1/00:18:05

*Teacher: Yes, the recount text is telling a real story. For example, just imagine that we have been to Bali and you can write the story about that. However, if the narrative text is a narration. Narration is a story, a story. For example?*

This underlined utterance showed that the event had not been done yet by the students. It could be known that previously the teacher asked whether the students had been to Bali or not, and they said no. Therefore, the teacher gave an example by asking them to imagine if they went to Bali, and they could compose their own recount text about it.

### 3.2.6 Counter Factual Presupposition

The least common type of presupposition disclosed in teacher's utterances is Counter-factual Presupposition. Counter Factual Presupposition arises when the presupposition of what is presupposed is false and the inverse of what is factual or contradictory to facts. For example, specific conditional structures, known as counter-factual conditionals, assume that the information in the if-clauses is false at the moment of utterance. The English teacher employed the Counter Factual Presupposition recognized in this study, which was explained in this section. The datum can be displayed as follows:

Datum M-1/CFP1/00:21:03

*Teacher: For example, “ago” is at the end of the sentence as the time signal.....  
There is more information about ago, but this is the “ago” structure at the back. If there is the amount of days, such as three days ago. Don’t say last three days. Is it clear? Is that clear?*

In this situation, the teacher explained the time signals used in the recount text to the students. Firstly, she told the students how to use the time signal ‘last’ in the sentence. Afterward, she taught them how to use another time signal, ‘ago’. The teacher uttered this underlined utterance to explain the structure of ‘ago’ if the students wanted to use it. She prevented them from making the wrong structure and gave them how to differentiate the use of ‘last’ and ‘ago’.

## 4 Conclusion

The study of presuppositions in the activity of teaching and learning is an intriguing issue to address as a type of linguistic research because this issue might cause individuals to perceive the presupposition from a better perspective. Moreover, presupposition is frequently encountered in literary works such as novels, films, etc. On the other hand, the authors classified the English teacher’s presuppositions as Existential Presupposition, Factive Presupposition, Non-Factive Presupposition, Lexical Presupposition, Structural Presupposition, and Counter Factual Presupposition.

The most frequent category of presupposition was structural presupposition, whereas counter-factual presupposition was the least represented. It can be argued that the teacher most frequently employed WH-questions to communicate the content and the if-conditionals to explain the subject to the students in the teaching and learning process. Future studies can further scrutinize some subjects involving analysis of presuppositions, such as examining any discussion made by the interlocutors in another action. Furthermore, classifications offered by other experts can be utilized to classify data since the present research categorized the data based on Yule’s category.

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