An analysis of presupposition used in The Wrestler

Emad Khalili
MA in General Linguistics, Sistan and Baluchestan University, Iran
Corresponding author email: Emadkh185@gmail.com

Abstract: Presupposition is one of the topics in semantic study and Pragmatics. In this paper the researcher is more concerned about the discussion presupposition in pragmatic studies, where presupposition is in one's mind about everything that exists in the world. In this paper the researcher use descriptive research method, because all the data comes from the movie and the data is reviewed based on theory of presuppositions. Presuppositions in The Wrestler movie are taken from the conversations of characters in the movie, and then analyzed by the theory proposed by Yule (1996) about the type Presuppositions to find out what types are often used in The Wrestler movie. Finally the writer has found all six types of presupposition which applied in The Wrestler movie, they are 9 existential (15%), 15 structural (26%), 11 factive (19%), 13 counter factual (22%), 3 non-factive (5%) and 7 lexical (12%). From this paper also, the researcher expect that this paper can be useful both in learning as an additional science in learning pragmatics, especially presupposition.

Keywords: Presupposition, movie, The Wrestler, Structural Presupposition, Yule (1996).

Introduction

Language is used to transport the messages or information from the speaker to the listener (Levinson 2, 1981). In transporting messages or information, people need conversation such as speaking or using some media such as advertisement, novel, magazine, etc. Fromkin 4 (1988: 4) states that language is much more than speech; it means language can be used by people in written and spoken language to express messages or information. In this paper, the writer would like to focus on analysis about presupposition in movie because of some reason:

First, this topic is needed to be analyzed in order to get a good understanding between the speaker and the listener to obtain a success communication between them. The listener should first understand the presupposition from utterances of the speaker.

Second, presupposition or assumption is everything that speaker wants to do before saying. Finally, the writer hopes this paper will give contribution related to the study of presupposition.

The Wrestler is a drama movie. Bob Siegel wrote The Wrestler. This movie released in 2008. It’s directed by Darren Aronofsky and Scott Franklin. Mickey Rourke (Robin Ramzinski / Randy “The Ram” Robinson), Marisa Tomei (Pam / Cassidy), Evan Rachel Wood (Stephanie Ramzinski) starred in The Wrestler. Rourke plays an elder professional wrestler who, despite his failing health and waning fame, continues to wrestle in an attempt to cling to the success of his 1980s heyday. He also tries to mend his relationship with his estranged daughter and to find romance with a woman who works as a stripper 14.

Yule 12 (1996:133) said that presupposition is something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance; it means that how people can draw the process of thinking in analysis of some aspects of invisible meaning. In another word, how the listeners can catch other information alongside with their interpretation. Yule also defines types of presupposition into six categories: Existential, Factive, Lexical, Structural, counterfactual, and Non-factive presupposition.

Existential presupposition

It is the assumption of the existence of the entities named by the speaker. For example, when a speaker says "Simon’s car is new", we can presuppose that Simon exists and that he has a car, also when someone says “Brett’s dog is cute”, we can presuppose that Brett exists and he has a dog.

Factive presupposition

It is the assumption that something is true due to the presence of some verbs such as "know" and "realize" and of phrases involving glad, for example. Thus, when a speaker says that he didn’t realize someone was ill, we can presuppose that someone is ill. Also, when he says "I'm glad it's over", we can presuppose that it’s over.

Lexical presupposition

It is the assumption that the speaker can act as if another meaning (word) will be understood. For instance:

Bruce stopped running. (>>He used to run.)
You are late again. (>> You were late before.)

In this case, the use of the expressions “stop” and “again” are taken to presuppose another concept.
Structural presupposition

It is the assumption associated with the use of certain words and phrases. For example, wh-question in English are conventionally interpreted with the presupposition that the information after the wh-form (e.g. when and where) is already known to be the case.

For examples
When did he travel to the Iceland? (>> he traveled)
Where did you buy the book? (>> you bought the book)

The listener perceives that the information presented is necessarily true rather than just the presupposition of the person asking the question.

Non-factive presupposition

It is an assumption that something is not true. For example, verbs like "dream", "imagine" and "pretend" are used with the presupposition that what follows is not true.

For examples:
I dreamed that I was rich. (>> I am not rich)
We imagined that we were in London. (>> We are not in London)

Counterfactual presupposition

It is the assumption that what is presupposed is not only untrue, but the opposite of what is true, or contrary to facts. For instance, some conditional structures, generally called counterfactual conditionals, presuppose that the information, in the if-clauses, is not true at the time of utterance.

For example: If you were my son, I would not allow you to do this. (>> you are not my son)

Research Method

The data is collected from The Wrestler movie. In collecting data, the writer exploits the technique of observation. There are some steps in collecting the data. First, watch the movie in order to find the presupposition from the conversation. Then, mark the sentence that contains presupposition in the movie. The data were analyzed by using model analysis proposed by Yule (1996). After collecting data, the writer designed the technique of analyzing data as follows: classifying the types of presupposition and analyzing the meaning of presupposition.

Discussions

In this paper, the data were taken from The Wrestler movie. The data were analyzed by classifying the presupposition in each type and then the writer found the presupposition that is intended in the utterances by analyzing the utterances and considering the context that causes this presupposition. Here, the researcher gave some examples of presupposition used in movie. Furthermore, the analysis is presented clearly below based on Yule’s theory (1996).

DATUM 1

Randy Maybe I'll give my daughter a call.

>> Randy has a daughter.

This situation happens in Rear parking lot when Randy and Cassidy start speaking at the club’s rear emergency exit. From Randy’s utterance it can be analyzed the relationship as in this propositions:
Maybe I'll give my daughter a call. (=p)
Randy has a daughter. (=q)
p >> q

It can be seen that the presupposition used in Randy’s utterance Maybe I'll give my daughter a call is existential presupposition because we can presuppose that Randy has a daughter.

DATUM 2

Randy By the time Ruckus fixes the tire, we've had so many Nyquil coladas we don't even realize we missed the damn gig!

>> We missed thedamn gig.

This situation happens in hotel bar when Randy and Booker are speaking. From Randy’s utterance it can be analyzed the relationship as in this propositions:
By the time Ruckus fixes the tire, we've had so many Nyquil coladas we don't even realize we missed the damn gig! (=p)
We missed the damn gig. (=q)
p >> q
It can be seen that the presupposition used in Randy’s utterance “By the time Ruckus fixes the tire, we've had so many Nyquil coladas we don’t even realize we missed the damn gig!” is a counterfactual presupposition because we can presuppose that both Randy and Booker missed the damn gig.

**DATUM 3**

Dr. Tarachandani: Your heart... You're going to have to start taking much better care of it.
Randy: You (Randy) weren’t taking care of it (your heart)

This situation happens in Randy’s hospital room when Randy and Dr. Tarachandani are speaking. From Dr. Tarachandani’s utterance it can be analyzed the relationship as in this propositions:
Your heart... You're going to have to start taking much better care of it. (=p)
You (Randy) weren’t taking care of it (your heart). (=q)
\[ p > q \]

It can be seen that the presupposition used in Dr. Tarachandani’s utterance “Your heart... You're going to have to start taking much better care of it.” is lexical presupposition because we can presuppose that Randy wasn’t taking care of his heart and Dr. Tarachandani advised him to take care much better of his heart.

**DATUM 4**

tehphanie: What do you want?
Randy: You want something.

This situation happens in Stephanie’s house when Randy and Stephanie are speaking. From Stephanie’s utterance it can be analyzed the relationship as in this propositions:
What do you want? (=p)
You want something. (=q)
\[ p >> q \]

It can be seen that the presupposition used in Stephanie’s utterance “What do you want?” is structural presupposition because we can presuppose that Randy wants something and Stephanie asks about it.

**DATUM 5**

Randy: I was wondering if you had something steadier. Full-time.
Randy: You hadn’t something steadier.

This situation happens in Wayne’s office when Randy and Wayne are speaking. From Randy’s utterance it can be analyzed the relationship as in this propositions:
If I were you, boy, I'd shut my hole unless you want to start explaining why you didn't say nothing I was wondering if you had something steadier. Full-time. (=p)
You hadn’t something steadier. (=q)
\[ p > q \]

It can be seen that the presupposition used in Randy’s utterance “I was wondering if you had something steadier. Full-time.” is a counterfactual presupposition because we can presuppose Wayne hadn’t something steadier and Randy’s wondering about it.

Counterfactual presupposition is an assumption that certain information is opposite the reality or some conditional structures. Presupposition is what the speaker judge or assume about everything around this world before saying, to make sense from the listener (Sperber 10, 2006).

**DATUM 6**

Randy: Pretend you like him.
Cassidy: You (Cassidy) don’t like him.

This situation happens in Cheetah’s when Randy and Cassidy sit together at a table. From this utterance it can be analyzed the relationship as in this propositions:
I don't know what brought us together that night. I had never been to that part of Westminster but ever Pretend you like him. (=p)
You (Cassidy) don’t like him. (=q)
\[ p >> q \]
It can be seen that the presupposition used in this utterance Pretend you like him is non-factive presupposition because we can presuppose Cassidy doesn’t like him.

In analysis of presupposition, there are three theorists who had explained about the theory of types of presupposition: Gadzar (1979, 124) who classified presupposition into two types, actual and potential presupposition. Yule (1996.27) who had been classified types of presupposition into six types such as existential, lexical, structural, factive, nonfactive and counterfactual. Hoag (2008) had been separated types of presupposition into two types, simple presupposition which classified into five forms and complex presupposition which classified into twenty six forms.

In this paper, the researcher has analyzed Yule’s theory (1996, 27) because this theorist has explained about types of presupposition in simpler way than another theorists and it more understandable with example and clear explanation. From the explanation in findings, has found all six types of presupposition which applied in The Wrestler movie, they are 9 existential (15%), 15 structural (26%), 11 factive (19%), 13 counter factual (22%), 3 non-factive (5%) and 7 lexical (12%). The mostly types of presupposition found in The Wrestler movie is Structural.

In the related previous studies based on Yule (1996), Yarahmadi and Olfati (2011) analyzed Presupposition of Anton Chekhov the Cherry Orchard. Borah (2013) analyzed presuppositions as a tool for communication. He reviewed Yule (1996) model. Homsa and Sohasti (2016) analyzed presuppositions on a talk show entitled gains through governance (Insight talk show). They found the most dominant type of presupposition that used was existential presupposition. Khalili (2017a) analyzed Presupposition of Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad. He (Ibid: 6) found all six types of presupposition which applied in the novel Heart of Darkness and among them, the type of presupposition mostly used were structural and factive. Khalili (2017b) analyzed Presupposition of Sing animation. He found five types of presupposition which applied in Sing animation and among them, the type of presupposition mostly used were structural and lexical. Khalili (2017c) analyzed Presupposition of The Reader movie. He found six types of presupposition which applied in The Reader movie and among them, the type of presupposition mostly used were structural and counterfactual.

The type of presupposition mostly used is Structural Presupposition and the less is Non-Factive Presupposition because structural is the assumption that part of a structure contains information being treated as already known and its mark by WH-questions. In The Wrestler movie, most of the conversation and utterances are stated by the form of WH-questions. The overall data of types of presupposition in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Types of Presupposition</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Existential</td>
<td>9 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Factive</td>
<td>11 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Counterfactual</td>
<td>13 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lexical</td>
<td>7 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td>15 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nonfactive</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions
Presupposition is a part of subject study in pragmatics which discuss about speaker meaning based on context to make sense and assertion. As a kind of linguistic study, the study of presupposition in texts are one of interesting topic to discuss, because this topic able to make people see the presupposition in different way. Usually, presupposition often found in communication between two or more person. And it makes the writer easier to analyze the presupposition.

From the analysis, the writer had found all six types of presupposition which applied in The Wrestler movie, they are 9 existential (15%), 15 structural (26%), 11 factive (19%), 13 counter factual (22%), 3 non-factive (5%) and 7 lexical (12%).

As interesting topic, presupposition has many aspects which can be analyzed such as the types and meaning of presupposition like existential presupposition, factive, lexical, structural, nonfactive and counterfactual.

This paper can give some knowledge for the readers about presupposition as part of pragmatic study in linguistic field, such as they can improve their knowledge about concept of language, communication, context meaning, pragmatics, and presupposition.

References


Khalili, E., 2017b, an analysis of presupposition used in Sing animation, 6th International Conference on innovation, Knowledge and Enterprise, Emirate: Dubai. (in press)


