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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Presupposition in the Dialogue of Barbie (2023): A Pragmatic Analysis on Yule's Theory

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis jenis-jenis praanggapan yang digunakan dalam film Barbie (2023) yang disutradarai oleh Greta Gerwig. Dengan mengacu pada tipologi Yule (1996) - eksistensial, faktif, leksikal, non-faktif, struktural, dan kontrafaktual - penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif yang didukung oleh pendekatan analisis wacana pragmatis. Data penelitian ini terdiri dari ujaran-ujaran yang dipilih dari naskah resmi film yang diverifikasi melalui penayangan berulang-ulang. Sebanyak 67 ungkapan pengandaian ditemukan, dengan 27 poin data yang dianalisis secara mendalam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa presuposisi eksistensial adalah yang paling dominan, biasanya dipicu oleh frasa kata benda yang pasti dan konstruksi posesif. Temuan ini menunjukkan bagaimana praanggapan membentuk makna implisit, meningkatkan pengembangan karakter, dan secara halus menyampaikan pesan sosiokultural dalam narasi audiovisual. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada penelitian pragmatis tentang wacana film dengan mengungkap bagaimana bahasa menyusun persepsi dan interaksi dalam konteks fiksi.

Key Word:
Presupposition, Yule's theory, Barbie 2023

Abstract

This study aims to identify and analyze the types of presupposition used in the film Barbie *(2023), directed by Greta Gerwig. Drawing on Yule's (1996) typology—existential, factive, lexical, non-factive, structural, and counterfactual—this research applies a descriptive qualitative method supported by a pragmatic discourse analysis approach. The data consists of selected utterances from the film's official script, verified through repeated viewing. A total of 67 presuppositional expressions were found, with 27 data points analyzed in depth. Results reveal existential presupposition as the most dominant, typically triggered by definite noun phrases and possessive constructions. These findings demonstrate how presupposition shapes implicit meaning, enhances character development, and subtly conveys sociocultural messages in audiovisual narratives. The study contributes to pragmatic research on film discourse by uncovering how language structures perception and interaction in fictional contexts.*

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INTRODUCTION

Language serves not only as a medium for conveying explicit information but also as a tool for expressing implicit meaning that shapes our perception of the world. In the field of pragmatics, presupposition is a key element that reflects background assumptions embedded in utterances. Yule (1996) defines presupposition as something the speaker assumes to be true and expects the hearer to accept when an utterance is made.

In audiovisual media such as film, presupposition plays a crucial role in establishing character relationships, constructing identity, and delivering messages subtly yet powerfully. Barbie (2023), directed by Greta Gerwig, offers a compelling discourse for pragmatic investigation due to its ideologically loaded dialogues, social critique, and exploration of identity in a modern patriarchal context. Through witty and layered exchanges, presupposition functions as a strategic tool for conveying deeper messages.

Previous studies have examined presupposition in academic writing (Fitriani, 2022), political discourse (Wahyuni, 2020), and digital media (Syahputra, 2021). However, limited research has explored presupposition in fictional cinematic dialogue, especially in films that blend satire with cultural critique. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the types of presupposition found in Barbie (2023) using Yule's (1996) framework, to understand how language is employed to construct implicit meaning in film discourse.

Previous research on presupposition has been conducted across various discursive contexts, including academic texts, political debates, and digital content. Fitriani (2022), in her analysis of thesis abstracts, found that existential and factive presuppositions were dominant, serving to establish the author's credibility and

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assert knowledge claims. Wahyuni (2020) investigated the use of structural and lexical presuppositions in political debates, showing how they were employed to shape public opinion and convey indirect criticism. Meanwhile, Syahputra (2021) explored presupposition in YouTube vlogs and concluded that vloggers utilized it to create a sense of intimacy with viewers by relying on shared assumptions.

These studies demonstrate that presupposition is a flexible pragmatic strategy across different genres. However, research on presupposition in fictional film dialogue—particularly in works containing social critique—remains scarce. As Stubbs (1983) suggests, discourse in media reflects underlying ideologies and cultural values, making it a rich field for critical linguistic analysis.

This study, therefore, focuses on the presuppositions found in Barbie (2023), a film that combines satire with social commentary. The film's dialogues address themes of identity, patriarchy, and existentialism, offering fertile ground for exploring the pragmatic functions of presupposition. This research seeks to build on previous findings by highlighting how presupposition functions in fictional audiovisual discourse as a form of implicit communication.

METHOD

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative method with a pragmatic approach. The goal is to describe the types of presupposition found in the dialogues of *Barbie* (2023). Following Creswell (1998), qualitative methods are used to interpret phenomena in natural contexts. The data comprises utterances from the film's characters that contain presupposition. The official script of *Barbie* (2023), sourced from Scrapsfromtheloft.com, was used and cross-checked for accuracy through repeated viewings via the Loklok application in September 2024. The primary instrument in this study is the researcher, following Sugiyono (2012), who emphasizes the interpretive role of the researcher in qualitative data analysis. Knowledge of presupposition theory and context is crucial for accurate data interpretation.

Data were collected through documentation and indirect participatory observation, involving: 1) Watching the film to understand dialogue context; 2) Comparing scenes with the script; 3) Identifying utterances containing presupposition; 4) Classifying data based on Yule's (1996) typology. Data analysis involves: 1) Identifying presuppositional utterances; 2) Classifying them into six categories; 3) Organizing them in a table based on character, type, and film timestamp; 4) Interpreting their meaning within context; 5) Drawing conclusions from the patterns found. The study applies theoretical triangulation by aligning findings with Yule's theory and consulting a pragmatic expert to ensure objective interpretation and reduce bias.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study analyzed 67 instances of presupposition in the Barbie (2023) movie, with 27 representative data selected for in-depth analysis. The classification was based on Yule's (1996) framework, which includes six types: existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counterfactual presupposition. The distribution of these types is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Distribution of Presupposition Types in the Barbie Movie (2023)

No	Type of Presupposition	Frequency	Percentage
1	Existential	20	29.9%
2	Factive	12	17.9%
3	Lexical	9	13.9%
4	Non-factive	5	7.5%
5	Structural	18	26.9%
6	Counterfactual	3	4.5%
	Total	67	100%

As presented in the table, existential presupposition is the most frequently occurring type, accounting for 29.9% of the total data. This indicates the high reliance on possessive constructions and definite noun phrases to convey assumed shared knowledge among characters.

Analysis of Representative Data

To provide further insight, one example from each type is analyzed below.

Existential Presupposition

Utterance: "My job is just, you know, Beach."

Presupposition: The speaker has a job.

The phrase "my job" implies the existence of a role, even if it lacks specific duties. This type illustrates how characters presuppose elements of identity and responsibility.

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Factive Presupposition

Utterance: "I don't know who I am without you."

Presupposition: The speaker has an identity.

The verb "know" assumes that the embedded clause is a known fact, highlighting the emotional depth of the character's struggle for self-definition.

Lexical Presupposition

Utterance: "She stopped dancing."

Presupposition: She danced before.

The verb "stop" triggers the presupposition that the action was previously taking place, emphasizing the continuity or change of behavior.

Non-factive Presupposition

Utterance: "I wish I could be like her."

Presupposition: The speaker is not like her.

This type of presupposition presents a contrast between the speaker's current state and their desire, signaling an unreal or imagined scenario.

Structural Presupposition

Utterance: "Why did you come here?"

Presupposition: The person came.

The WH-question structure assumes that the action occurred, even though it is presented as a question.

Counterfactual Presupposition

Utterance: "If I had stayed, things would be different."

Presupposition: The speaker did not stay.

This conditional sentence presupposes the opposite of the stated condition, often used to express regret or alternative outcomes.

The results of this study demonstrate that presupposition plays a critical role in shaping the meaning of dialogues in Barbie (2023). The dominance of existential presupposition reflects the characters' assumptions about identity, ownership, and social roles. This finding is consistent with previous studies such as Saputra et al. (2021) and Dwidandi (2022), which also reported the prevalence of existential presupposition in various forms of discourse.

Furthermore, the presence of other presupposition types reveals how characters express emotions, hypothetical situations, and narrative developments indirectly. This aligns with Yule's (1996) assertion that presuppositions serve as linguistic tools to convey background assumptions, enhancing communication efficiency in both real and fictional contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the types of presupposition in *Barbie* (2023) using Yule's (1996) framework. All six categories were identified, with existential presupposition being most prominent. These findings affirm that presupposition functions as both a linguistic device and a narrative strategy, enabling characters to convey implicit meaning, develop personality, and subtly present social critique. The results contribute to pragmatic research by highlighting how presupposition operates in fictional film dialogue. Future studies could explore presupposition across different genres or media—such as novels, advertisements, or public interviews—and apply alternative theoretical lenses to enrich pragmatic and discourse analysis in language studies. Beyond its role as a linguistic device, presupposition in the film also enhances the storyline by conveying implicit meaning through the interactions between characters. The findings indicate that presupposition analysis can provide valuable insights into how indirect information is communicated in fictional discourse, enriching our understanding of character dynamics and communication in the film. For future research, it is recommended to explore presupposition in other film genres or across different media, such as novels, advertisements, or public interviews. This approach would not only deepen the discussion of presupposition but also offer new perspectives on its role in indirect communication within pragmatic studies. Additionally, future studies could incorporate other theories to further enhance presupposition analysis and contribute to the development of discourse analysis education, particularly in language learning contexts.

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