

PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF PRESUPPOSITION IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: This article examines the pragmatic features of presupposition in English and Uzbek from a comparative perspective. Presupposition is considered one of the fundamental pragmatic mechanisms through which speakers communicate implicit information while assuming shared background knowledge with their interlocutors. The study explores the linguistic means used to express presupposition in both languages and identifies their similarities and differences. The analysis demonstrates that despite typological distinctions between English and Uzbek, presupposition performs comparable communicative functions in both languages by facilitating discourse coherence, reducing informational redundancy, and strengthening communicative efficiency. The findings contribute to comparative pragmatics and provide useful insights for discourse analysis, translation studies, and intercultural communication.

Keywords: presupposition, pragmatics, comparative linguistics, English, Uzbek, discourse,

Introduction

Modern linguistic research has increasingly shifted its attention from the formal structure of language to the investigation of meaning in actual communication. Rather than focusing exclusively on grammatical or lexical systems, contemporary linguistics emphasizes how language users construct, interpret, and negotiate meaning within particular communicative situations. As a result, pragmatics has become one of the central branches of linguistic science because it investigates the relationship between linguistic expressions, speakers, hearers, and communicative context.

Among various pragmatic phenomena, presupposition occupies a particularly significant position. It refers to information that a speaker assumes to be already known, accepted, or shared by the interlocutor before an utterance is produced. Unlike explicit propositions, presupposed information remains in the background of communication and often passes unnoticed, although it substantially influences the interpretation of discourse. Consequently, successful communication depends not only on what is directly stated but also on what is implicitly assumed.

The concept of presupposition has attracted considerable scholarly attention since the works of Frege, Strawson, Karttunen, Stalnaker, Levinson, and Yule. Their studies demonstrate that presupposition cannot be adequately explained solely by grammatical structure because it involves semantic interpretation, contextual knowledge, pragmatic inference, and discourse organization. Recent developments in comparative pragmatics have further emphasized that presupposition should be investigated across different languages to identify universal communicative principles as well as language-specific characteristics.

English and Uzbek provide an interesting basis for comparative analysis because they belong to different language families and represent different typological systems. English is predominantly an analytic language whose grammatical relations are largely expressed through word order and function words, whereas Uzbek is an agglutinative language characterized by rich inflectional morphology and relatively flexible sentence structure. These typological differences influence the linguistic realization of presupposition but do not necessarily alter its communicative functions.

In English, presupposition is frequently triggered by definite descriptions, factive verbs, lexical items such as *stop* or *continue*, cleft constructions, and interrogative sentences. In Uzbek, similar pragmatic meanings are often expressed through possessive suffixes, lexical predicates, contextual reference, and specific morphological markers. Although the grammatical mechanisms differ, both languages enable speakers to transmit background information efficiently while minimizing unnecessary repetition.

The comparative investigation of presupposition has practical significance beyond theoretical linguistics. It contributes to discourse analysis, translation studies, intercultural communication, language teaching, and forensic linguistics by explaining how implicit meanings are constructed and interpreted in different communicative environments. Understanding these mechanisms is particularly important in multilingual communication where differences in presuppositional structures may lead to misunderstanding or inaccurate interpretation.

The purpose of this article is to examine the pragmatic features of presupposition in English and Uzbek through comparative analysis. Special attention is devoted to identifying the principal linguistic mechanisms that trigger presupposition and explaining their communicative functions within natural discourse. The study also aims to demonstrate that despite considerable typological differences between the two languages, presupposition operates according to common pragmatic principles that reflect universal characteristics of human communication.

The Pragmatic Nature of Presupposition

Presupposition is one of the central concepts in contemporary pragmatics because it explains how speakers communicate more information than is explicitly expressed. During communication, speakers often assume that certain facts are already known or accepted by the listener. These assumptions form the background of an utterance and enable interlocutors to interpret the intended meaning efficiently without requiring every piece of information to be stated directly. Consequently, presupposition contributes to both communicative economy and discourse coherence.

Unlike semantic meaning, which is encoded directly in linguistic expressions, presupposed information depends on the interaction between language, context, and shared knowledge. The interpretation of an utterance therefore requires not only grammatical competence but also pragmatic competence. Hearers continuously combine linguistic signals with contextual information in order to reconstruct assumptions that remain implicit throughout communication.

Scholars have proposed different approaches to the study of presupposition. The semantic approach primarily investigates the truth conditions of presupposed propositions, whereas the pragmatic approach emphasizes speakers' communicative intentions and the common ground shared by interlocutors. Contemporary linguistic research generally recognizes that neither perspective alone sufficiently explains the complexity of presupposition. Instead, presupposition should be viewed as a dynamic phenomenon emerging from the interaction between linguistic structure and communicative context.

An important characteristic of presupposition is its relative stability under negation. In many cases, the background assumption remains unchanged even when the main proposition is negated. Consider the following English example:
John has stopped smoking.

The sentence presupposes that John used to smoke. When the sentence is negated:

John has not stopped smoking.

the same background assumption remains valid because the speaker still assumes that John smoked previously. This property distinguishes presupposition from ordinary entailment and demonstrates its unique pragmatic status.

A similar phenomenon can be observed in Uzbek:

Ali chekishni to'xtatdi.

The sentence presupposes that Ali ilgari chekar edi.

Its negative counterpart,

Ali chekishni to'xtatmadi, preserves exactly the same background assumption. The persistence of implicit information under negation illustrates that presupposition is largely independent of the truth value of the explicit proposition.

Another essential feature of presupposition is its dependence on shared knowledge. Communication becomes successful only when both interlocutors recognize the same contextual assumptions. For instance, the English sentence

The manager has arrived.

presupposes that the participants already know which manager is being referred to. Likewise, the Uzbek sentence

Direktor keldi functions effectively only if both speaker and listener can identify the intended referent through their shared communicative experience. Without such common ground, interpretation becomes incomplete or ambiguous.

Presupposition also contributes significantly to discourse cohesion. Rather than introducing every participant or event repeatedly, speakers rely on previously established assumptions that connect individual sentences into a coherent discourse. This mechanism enables communication to proceed smoothly while reducing unnecessary repetition. Consequently, presupposition serves not only as a pragmatic phenomenon but also as an important discourse-organizing strategy.

From a comparative perspective, English and Uzbek reveal considerable similarities despite their structural differences. English primarily realizes presupposition through articles, lexical triggers, auxiliary constructions, and syntactic patterns, whereas Uzbek frequently depends on possessive suffixes, case markers, verbal morphology, and contextual interpretation. Nevertheless, both languages employ presupposition to achieve identical communicative objectives: introducing new information while maintaining continuity with previously established knowledge.

These observations indicate that presupposition represents a universal pragmatic mechanism rather than a language-specific grammatical phenomenon. Although the linguistic resources differ across languages, speakers consistently employ presupposition to facilitate interpretation, strengthen discourse coherence, and minimize communicative effort. Therefore, comparative investigation of presupposition contributes not only to pragmatics but also to discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication.

Comparative Pragmatic Features of Presupposition in English and Uzbek

Although English and Uzbek belong to different language families, both languages demonstrate remarkably similar pragmatic principles in the realization of presupposition. Their differences are primarily structural, whereas their communicative functions remain largely equivalent. The comparative analysis reveals

several major dimensions through which presupposition operates in both linguistic systems.

The first common feature concerns the establishment of shared background knowledge. Speakers in both languages assume that certain information is already accessible to the listener before introducing new propositions. This assumption reduces informational redundancy and increases communicative efficiency. For example:

English: *Mary's brother graduated yesterday.*

Presupposition: Mary has a brother.

Uzbek: *Maryamning akasi kecha universitetni bitirdi.*

Presupposition: Maryamning akasi bor.

In both cases, the existence of the brother is treated as previously known information rather than newly introduced content.

A second similarity involves the role of lexical triggers. Certain verbs automatically activate background assumptions regardless of sentence polarity.

English: *She realized that the report was incorrect.*

Presupposition: The report was incorrect.

Uzbek: *U hisobot noto'g'ri ekanligini angladi.*

Presupposition: Hisobot noto'g'ri edi.

These examples illustrate that cognitive predicates introduce information whose truth is presupposed by the speaker.

Another important similarity concerns structural presupposition. Interrogative constructions frequently presuppose the existence of an event rather than questioning whether the event occurred.

English: *Where did you park the car?*

Presupposition: You parked the car.

Uzbek: *Mashinani qayerga qo'ydingiz?*

Presupposition: Mashina qo'yilgan.

Both questions request additional information while assuming the occurrence of the event itself.

Despite these similarities, English and Uzbek differ in the grammatical resources through which presupposition is expressed. English relies extensively on definite articles (*the*), auxiliary verbs, and fixed syntactic patterns. Uzbek, lacking an article system, compensates through contextual reference, possessive morphology, and flexible discourse organization. Consequently, English often encodes presupposition more explicitly, whereas Uzbek relies more heavily on pragmatic inference.

The comparative analysis therefore suggests that typological differences influence the linguistic realization of presupposition but not its communicative

purpose. In both languages, presupposition functions as an essential mechanism for organizing discourse, facilitating interpretation, and maintaining coherence between speakers and listeners.

CONCLUSION

Presupposition is one of the most important pragmatic mechanisms that enables speakers to communicate implicit information efficiently while maintaining discourse coherence. The comparative analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that English and Uzbek, despite belonging to different typological language families, employ presupposition in remarkably similar ways to establish shared background knowledge between interlocutors. The principal differences lie in the linguistic resources through which presupposition is expressed rather than in its communicative function.

The study reveals that English primarily realizes presupposition through definite descriptions, lexical triggers, factive predicates, and syntactic constructions, whereas Uzbek frequently relies on possessive morphology, verbal forms, contextual reference, and discourse organization. Nevertheless, both languages use presupposition to reduce informational redundancy, strengthen textual cohesion, and facilitate the interpretation of implicit meanings in communication.

The findings also confirm that successful interpretation of presupposed information depends not only on grammatical competence but also on pragmatic knowledge and contextual awareness. Speakers and hearers continuously rely on shared assumptions to construct coherent discourse, making presupposition an essential component of effective communication. Consequently, the comparative investigation of presupposition contributes to a better understanding of discourse organization, intercultural communication, translation studies, and comparative pragmatics.

In conclusion, presupposition should be regarded as a universal pragmatic phenomenon whose realization varies according to the structural characteristics of individual languages. Future research may extend this comparative perspective by incorporating larger corpora, additional language pairs, and computational approaches to the automatic identification of presupposition in natural discourse.

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