

PRESUPPOSITION TRIGGERS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A COMPARATIVE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

Kurbanov Elbek Elmurodovich

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-1640-9404> kurbanov_elbek@yahoo.com

Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages

Abstract: This article investigates the linguistic nature of presupposition triggers in English and Uzbek from a comparative perspective. Presupposition triggers are linguistic elements that introduce background assumptions into discourse without expressing them explicitly. The study examines the principal categories of presupposition triggers, including existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counterfactual triggers, and analyzes their realization in two typologically different languages. The findings demonstrate that although English and Uzbek employ different grammatical resources, they share common pragmatic mechanisms in activating presupposed information. The research contributes to comparative pragmatics and provides useful implications for discourse analysis, translation studies, and language teaching.

Keywords: presupposition trigger, pragmatics, comparative linguistics, English, Uzbek, discourse analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Presupposition has long been recognized as one of the most important concepts in pragmatics because it explains how speakers encode background assumptions within ordinary communication. Rather than stating every piece of information explicitly, speakers frequently rely on linguistic expressions that activate implicit meanings already assumed to be shared by the participants. These linguistic expressions are commonly referred to as presupposition triggers. They function as signals that guide hearers toward particular background interpretations while maintaining the economy and coherence of discourse.

Since the pioneering studies of Frege, Strawson, Karttunen, and Stalnaker, presupposition triggers have attracted considerable attention in semantic and pragmatic research. Scholars have demonstrated that lexical items, grammatical constructions, and syntactic patterns may all introduce presupposed information. Consequently, presupposition is no longer regarded solely as a semantic phenomenon but as a complex interaction between linguistic structure, contextual knowledge, and communicative intention.

English and Uzbek provide an interesting basis for comparative investigation because they belong to different typological groups. English is an analytic language characterized by a relatively fixed word order and extensive use of function words, whereas Uzbek is an agglutinative language that relies heavily on inflectional morphology and contextual interpretation. Despite these structural differences, both languages employ a variety of presupposition triggers that perform similar

communicative functions. Comparing these triggers makes it possible to distinguish universal pragmatic principles from language-specific grammatical mechanisms.

The purpose of this article is to examine the principal types of presupposition triggers in English and Uzbek and to identify their linguistic characteristics through comparative analysis. Particular attention is paid to their structural realization, pragmatic functions, and contribution to discourse interpretation. The study also seeks to demonstrate how different trigger types facilitate efficient communication by activating implicit information shared between interlocutors.

Presupposition Triggers as Linguistic Units

Presupposition triggers are lexical, grammatical, or syntactic elements that automatically introduce assumptions into discourse. They do not create new factual information; instead, they activate information that speakers expect listeners to recognize as already known or readily inferable. In this sense, presupposition triggers function as linguistic indicators connecting explicit propositions with implicit background knowledge.

One of the defining characteristics of presupposition triggers is that they preserve background assumptions even when the explicit proposition is questioned or negated. This property distinguishes them from ordinary semantic entailment and explains their importance in pragmatic interpretation. Because presupposed information tends to remain stable across different sentence forms, presupposition triggers play a crucial role in maintaining discourse continuity.

Linguistically, presupposition triggers may be expressed through individual lexical items, grammatical constructions, or syntactic patterns. Although their formal realization differs across languages, their communicative purpose remains remarkably consistent: to facilitate efficient communication by minimizing unnecessary repetition while preserving shared knowledge.

From a comparative perspective, English relies heavily on lexical and syntactic triggers, whereas Uzbek frequently combines lexical markers with morphological and contextual devices. Nevertheless, both languages employ presupposition triggers to organize discourse, establish common ground, and guide pragmatic interpretation. Their analysis therefore provides valuable insight into the interaction between grammar, meaning, and communication.

Types of Presupposition Triggers in English and Uzbek

Presupposition triggers constitute one of the most significant linguistic mechanisms through which speakers introduce implicit assumptions into discourse. Although researchers have proposed different classifications, six major categories are generally recognized in contemporary pragmatic studies. These categories differ in their grammatical realization but perform the common function of activating background information that facilitates discourse interpretation. A comparative examination of English and Uzbek demonstrates that both languages employ these trigger types despite considerable typological differences.

Existential Triggers

Existential presupposition is triggered by linguistic expressions that imply the existence of a particular person, object, or entity. In English, this type is commonly realized through possessive constructions and definite noun phrases, while Uzbek primarily relies on possessive suffixes and contextual definiteness.

English

John's bicycle has been repaired.

Presupposition: John has a bicycle.

Uzbek

Jasurning velosipedi ta'mirlandi.

Presupposition: Jasurning velosipedi mavjud.

In both examples, the speaker assumes the existence of the bicycle without explicitly asserting it. The difference lies in grammatical realization: English expresses possession analytically, whereas Uzbek encodes possession morphologically.

Factive Triggers

Factive predicates presuppose the truth of the proposition embedded within them. Verbs expressing knowledge, awareness, regret, or realization belong to this category because they present the complement clause as factual information.

English

She realized that the meeting had been cancelled.

Presupposition: The meeting had been cancelled.

Uzbek

U yig'ilish bekor qilinganini anglab yetdi.

Presupposition: Yig'ilish bekor qilingan.

The communicative function remains identical in both languages: the embedded proposition is interpreted as true regardless of the main clause.

Lexical Triggers

Lexical presupposition arises from the inherent meaning of particular lexical items. Verbs such as *stop*, *continue*, *begin*, and *return* naturally imply a previous state or event.

English

They stopped arguing.

Presupposition: They had been arguing before.

Uzbek

Ular tortishishni to'xtatdilar.

Presupposition: Ular avval tortishayotgan edi.

Lexical triggers are particularly stable because their presuppositional meaning derives directly from lexical semantics rather than contextual inference.

Structural Triggers

Structural presupposition is associated with grammatical constructions that presuppose the existence of particular information. Interrogative sentences, cleft constructions, and relative clauses frequently function as structural triggers.

English

Why did Sarah resign?

Presupposition: Sarah resigned.

Uzbek

Sara nega ishdan bo‘shadi?

Presupposition: Sara ishdan bo‘shagan.

The question seeks an explanation rather than confirmation of the event itself. Consequently, the occurrence of the event is treated as shared background knowledge.

Non-factive Triggers

Non-factive predicates describe imagined, hypothetical, or unreal situations. Unlike factive predicates, they do not presuppose the truth of the embedded proposition.

English

He imagined that he was the winner.

Presupposition: The proposition belongs to imagination rather than reality.

Uzbek

U o‘zini g‘olib deb tasavvur qildi.

Presupposition: Bu holat tasavvur mahsuli.

These constructions explicitly distinguish mental representation from objective reality while guiding the hearer toward the intended interpretation.

Counterfactual Triggers

Counterfactual constructions describe situations contrary to reality. They presuppose that the opposite situation actually occurred.

English

If she had arrived earlier, she would have met the director.

Presupposition: She did not arrive earlier.

Uzbek

Agar u ertaroq kelganida, direktor bilan uchrashgan bo‘lardi.

Presupposition: U ertaroq kelmagan.

Counterfactual triggers frequently occur in argumentative discourse because they enable speakers to evaluate unrealized alternatives.

Comparative Characteristics of Presupposition Triggers

Although English and Uzbek employ different grammatical systems, the comparative analysis indicates that presupposition triggers perform equivalent communicative functions. Their primary objective is to establish common ground between speakers while reducing the amount of explicitly expressed information.

English generally depends on articles, auxiliary verbs, lexical predicates, and fixed syntactic constructions to activate presupposition. Uzbek, by contrast, relies more heavily on possessive morphology, verbal suffixes, contextual interpretation, and discourse structure. These structural differences reflect the analytic nature of English and the agglutinative character of Uzbek rather than differences in pragmatic function.

Another important observation concerns the stability of presupposition across sentence transformations. Regardless of language, existential and factive triggers exhibit the highest degree of stability because their background assumptions remain

largely unchanged under negation or interrogation. Lexical and structural triggers demonstrate similarly predictable behavior, whereas non-factive and counterfactual triggers require greater contextual interpretation due to their hypothetical nature.

The comparative evidence therefore suggests that presupposition triggers constitute universal pragmatic devices whose linguistic realization varies according to typological characteristics. Their systematic analysis contributes not only to comparative pragmatics but also to discourse analysis, translation studies, second-language acquisition, and intercultural communication by explaining how implicit meanings are encoded and interpreted across different linguistic systems.

CONCLUSION

Presupposition triggers represent one of the most significant mechanisms through which implicit information is introduced into discourse. The comparative analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that English and Uzbek employ similar pragmatic principles despite their typological differences. While English primarily relies on lexical items, definite descriptions, auxiliary constructions, and syntactic patterns, Uzbek expresses presupposition through possessive morphology, verbal forms, contextual reference, and discourse organization. These structural differences do not affect the communicative function of presupposition, which remains consistent across both languages.

The analysis of existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counterfactual triggers indicates that each category contributes differently to the interpretation of discourse. Existential and factive triggers introduce relatively stable background assumptions, whereas lexical and structural triggers facilitate discourse cohesion by connecting new information with previously established knowledge. Non-factive and counterfactual triggers, in contrast, construct hypothetical or imagined situations while still guiding hearers toward particular pragmatic interpretations.

The findings confirm that presupposition triggers are not merely grammatical devices but essential components of successful communication. They enable speakers to minimize redundancy, maintain textual coherence, and activate shared knowledge efficiently. Consequently, their study contributes to comparative pragmatics, discourse analysis, translation studies, intercultural communication, and foreign language teaching.

In conclusion, the comparative investigation reveals that presupposition triggers constitute universal pragmatic mechanisms whose linguistic realization reflects the structural characteristics of individual languages rather than fundamental differences in communicative behavior. Future studies may extend this research by examining larger multilingual corpora and exploring computational approaches to the automatic identification of presupposition triggers in authentic discourse.

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