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PRAGMALINGUISTIC PRESUPPOSITION IN LINGUISTIC THEORY: CONCEPTUAL AND FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The article aims to clarify the notion of pragmalinguistic presupposition within modern linguistic theory. Pragmalinguistic presupposition is understood as a set of assumptions implicitly embedded in an utterance and taken for granted by the participants of communication. The study examines how such implicit knowledge influences discourse interpretation and communicative effectiveness.

Key words: presupposition, utterance, semantic component, pragmalinguistics, cognitive aspects

Introduction

In contemporary linguistic research, pragmalinguistic presupposition is commonly interpreted as the set of assumptions that a speaker or writer makes about the knowledge, beliefs, or expectations of the addressee. It represents a type of pragmatic inference grounded in the shared cognitive and cultural background of communicative participants. These presuppositions are not explicitly stated but are implicitly encoded in linguistic structures.

Pragmalinguistic presuppositions play a significant role in communication because they allow speakers to transmit meaning economically and efficiently. They facilitate mutual understanding by relying on shared cultural conventions, contextual knowledge, and common cognitive experience.In a broader sense, pragmalinguistic presupposition can be viewed as the relationship between the speaker and the contextual appropriateness of an utterance. Such an interpretation highlights the intersubjective nature of communication. The total set of presuppositions held by a speaker in a given context defines the range of possible communicative situations in which the utterance is meaningful. In this way, presuppositions determine the boundaries of the

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communicative or phenomenological situation.

It is important to note that presuppositions are not required to be objectively true. Instead, they are treated as true, or at least assumed to be true, by communicative participants. A proposition may be considered a pragmalinguistic presupposition if the speaker regards it as self-evident and assumes that the interlocutor shares the same belief. Thus, presuppositions can be interpreted as complex cognitive dispositions that become visible in speech behavior.

The success and appropriateness of an utterance depend on such presupposed information. Effective communication requires a shared cognitive base or common presuppositional fund among participants. Without this shared background, the joint processes of producing and interpreting discourse become difficult or even impossible because the principle of intersubjectivity is disrupted. However, this common knowledge should not be understood as a fixed or identical set of facts available to all participants; rather, it is a dynamic and context-dependent cognitive resource.

Materials and Methods

In linguistic studies, different types of presuppositions are identified depending on the analytical perspective. The most frequently discussed approaches include cognitive-pragmatic, cultural-linguistic, and logical perspectives. Some scholars focus on only one of these aspects, while others advocate an integrated or cumulative approach.From the cognitive-pragmatic perspective, presupposition is interpreted as a set of conditions that must be fulfilled before a sentence can function communicatively. Within this approach, presuppositions may relate either to the correspondence between the content of an utterance and an extra-linguistic situation or to conditions not directly connected with content but necessary for the successful realization of a speech act.In this framework, presuppositions may also be classified according to their relation to different cognitive spaces, such as individual knowledge, collective knowledge, or a shared cognitive base. These cognitive spaces intersect during communication, forming a macrocognitive layer that represents the domain of shared knowledge and common representations.

The cultural-linguistic perspective distinguishes types of presuppositions based on the propositional structure of the sentence. Within this approach, presupposition is treated as an implicit judgment derived from an utterance. Scholars working in this tradition identify several characteristic features of presuppositions, including their implicit nature, their derivability from a sentence, their resistance to negation, and their pragmatic content.

Discussion

Based on propositional content, linguists identify several types of presupposition. One category includes factual presuppositions, typically introduced by verbs of mental activity or perception. These are often found in sentences with subordinate clauses or impersonal constructions and are interpreted as reflecting real or factual situations.Another category includes emotive presuppositions, which are expressed through emotive predicates. These presuppositions imply a particular subjective attitude of the speaker toward the content of the utterance, often reflecting whether the situation corresponds to the speaker's expectations or desires.

From the logical perspective, presupposition is defined using the concepts of truth and logical consequence. Within this approach, scholars distinguish between logical and pragmatic presuppositions. Logical presuppositions are determined by the relationship between abstract structures and the world, whereas pragmatic presuppositions depend on the relationship between utterances and their contexts.

Logical presuppositions may be further subdivided into several types based on patterns of logical implication. In contrast, pragmatic presuppositions are closely connected to the appropriateness of coordinating an utterance with certain background assumptions.Because presupposition is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, it is difficult to analyze it within a single theoretical framework. For this reason, some scholars propose a cumulative approach that combines semantic and pragmatic perspectives. Within the semantic-pragmatic framework, presupposition is interpreted as a special case

of inference, that is, a judgment derived from a given statement according to principles of truth or relevance. At the same time, these judgments function as preconditions for the realization of the utterance, bringing this approach closer to discourse-centered models of analysis.

Results

Within the integrated approach, two major types of presuppositions can be identified:

Semantic presupposition, understood as a special type of semantic consequence. This type includes two subcategories:

potential presuppositions of a sentence in a neutral or zero context;

actual presuppositions of an utterance in a real communicative context.

Pragmatic presupposition, defined as the relationship between the speaker and the contextual appropriateness of an utterance.

Another approach interprets presupposition as the way in which participants in communication use extra-linguistic knowledge to construct the semantic coherence of a text. In this sense, presupposition represents a component of the shared knowledge of both speaker and listener.

Some researchers distinguish between situational (pragmatic) presuppositions, which relate to knowledge about typical communicative situations, and linguistic presuppositions, which are further divided into referential and semantic types. Referential or existential presuppositions operate at the level of the sentence, whereas semantic presuppositions are determined by the meanings of individual lexical units.

Within the logical-semantic approach, presuppositional relations are often represented by the formula: X presupposes Y, where Y denotes the assumption contained implicitly in the sentence, and X represents the statement that carries the presupposition.

Conclusion

In linguistic theory, pragmatic presupposition refers to the assumptions a speaker or writer makes about the knowledge and beliefs of the addressee. It is a form of pragmatic inference grounded in shared background knowledge. These presuppositions remain implicit but are essential for the interpretation of discourse.

Pragmatic presuppositions play a crucial role in communication, as they enable speakers to convey meaning efficiently and ensure mutual understanding. They are shaped by cultural norms, contextual factors, and the shared cognitive experience of communicative participants.

Comprehensive classifications of presuppositions also include:

Communicatively irrelevant elements of sentence meaning, such as existential presuppositions;

Components of lexical meaning that ensure correct reference to a denotation;

Syntagmatic presuppositions, reflecting semantic determination between words or statements in a text;

Communicative presuppositions, related to the speaker's assumptions about the addressee's level of awareness.

Thus, presupposition can be regarded as a central mechanism that connects linguistic structure, cognitive processes, and communicative context.

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