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An Analysis of Presupposition Used in Oedipus Rex

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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. The researcher expected that this paper can be useful in learning as an additional science in learning pragmatics, especially presupposition. The researcher used descriptive research method, because all the data comes from the novel and the data is reviewed based on theory of presuppositions. Presuppositions in Oedipus Rex are taken from the conversations of characters in the novel, and then analyzed by the theory proposed by Yule (1996) about the type Presuppositions to find out what types are often used in Oedipus Rex. The researcher has found five types of presupposition which applied in Oedipus Rex, they are 14 existential (27%), 5 lexical (9%), 16 structural (30%), 8factive (15%) and 10 counterfactual (19%). The type of presupposition mostly used is Structural Presupposition and the less is 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 Oedipus Rex, most of the conversation and utterances are stated by the form of WH-questions.

Keywords: Drama, Oedipus Rex, Presupposition, Sophocles, Yule (1996).

Introduction:

Language is used to transport the messages or information from the speaker to the listener (Levinson, 1981). In transporting messages or information, people need conversation such as speaking or using some media such as advertisement, novel, magazine, etc. Fromkin (1988: 4) states that language is much more than speech; it means language can be used by people in written language to express messages or information.

Drama is one of the printed media which uses written language. In drama similar with spoken language, sometimes there are unstated meaning contrasted with its expression. It makes the readers who read the drama, unable to comprehend and understand about the meaning that appears in some conversation. Here is an utterance in which the information assumed, "Jake drives a car". By this utterance, the speaker presupposes that Jake is a person that exists and he can drive a car. This utterance may have more than one presupposition that Jake has the car and he can drive more than one car.

In this paper, the writer would like to focus on analysis about presupposition in drama 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.
- Third, Oedipus Rex is one of greatest and the most complex plays ever written in any language.
- Finally, the writer hopes this paper will give contribution related to the study of presupposition.

Sophocles's Oedipus Rex is likely the most famous tragedy ever written (Whitman 1951). It is known by many titles (the most common: Oedipus Rex), including Oedipus the King and Oedipus Tyrannus (Bates, 1940). Sophocles first produced the play in Athens about 430 B.C. at the Great Dionysia, a religious and cultural festival held in honor of Dionysus, where it won second prize (Bushnell, 1988). In the play Oedipus, King of Thebes, upon hearing that his city is being destroyed by fire and plague, sends his brother-in-law Creon to find a cure from the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi. When Creon returns Oedipus begins exploration the death of his predecessor, Laius, and found out through various means that he himself was the one who had unknowingly killed Laius and then married his own mother, Jocasta. Jocasta commits suicide; Oedipus blinds himself, left his children, and is led away. Characters of these play are: Oedipus, king of Thebes, the Priest of Zeus, Creon, Oedipus' brother-in-law, Chorus of the old men of Thebes, Tiresias, blind prophet, Jocasta, wife of Oedipus, sister of Creon, widow of Laius, the former king, Messenger from Corinth, Shepherd of Laius, the former king (in the manuscripts called the Servant.) and Servant, from inside the house (in the manuscripts the Second Messenger or Messenger from the House).
Yule (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.

Yule's Presuppositions model (1996):

Existential Presuppositions:
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 is 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 Oedipus Rex by Sophocles. In collecting data, the writer exploits the technique of non-participant observation. There are some steps in collecting the data. First, reads the drama in order to find the presupposition from the conversation. Then, mark the sentence that contains presupposition in the drama.
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 Oedipus Rex by Sophocles. 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 drama. Furthermore, the analysis is presented clearly below based on Yule's theory (1996).

Datum 1

Priest	*I am the priest of Zeus*, and these were chosen from the young men. There is another group wreathed as suppliant …
>>	A priest exists.

This situation happens when Priest and Oedipus were speaking in palace. From Priest's utterance it can be analyzed the relationship as in this propositions:
I am the priest of Zeus, and these were chosen from the young men. There is another group wreathed as suppliant. (=p)
A priest exists. (=q)
p >> q
It can be seen that the presupposition used in Priest's utterance *I am the priest of Zeus, and these were chosen from the young men. There is another group wreathed as suppliant …* is existential presupposition because we can presuppose that a priest exist and he is priest of Zeus.

Datum 2

Shepherd	Out of pity, master. It seemed he would bear him away to another land, his home. But he rescued him into the greatest evils. For if you are who he says, *know that you were born cursed.*
>>	You were born cursed.

This situation happens when Oedipus and Shepherd were speaking. From Shepherd's utterance it can be analyzed the relationship as in this propositions:
Out of pity, master. It seemed he would bear him away to another land, his home. But he rescued him into the greatest evils. For if you are who he says, know that you were born cursed. (=p)
You were born cursed. (=q)
p >> q
It can be seen that the presupposition used in Sheoherd's utterance *Out of pity, master. It seemed he would bear him away to another land, his home. But he rescued him into the greatest evils. For if you are who he says, know that you were born cursed.* Is factive presupposition because we can presuppose that Oedipus were born cursed.

Datum 3

Shepherd	By the gods, master, do not inquire further!
Oedipus	You are dead if *I have to ask it again!*
>>	I asked this question before.

This situation happens when Oedipus asked Shepherd about son of Laius. From Oedipus' utterance it can be analyzed the relationship as in this proposition:
You are dead if I have to ask it again! (=p)
I asked this question before. (=q)
p >> q
It can be seen that the presupposition used in Oedipus' utterance *I asked this question before.* is lexical presupposition because we can presuppose that Oedipus asked Shepherd about son of Laius before.

Datum 4

Tiresias *When you truly understand that wedding?*

>> You truly understand this wedding.

This situation happens when Tiresias and Oedipus were speaking about Jocasta's wedding. From Tiresias' utterance it can be analyzed the relationship as in this proposition:
When you truly understand that wedding? (=p)
You truly understand this wedding. (=q)
p >> q
It can be seen that the presupposition used in Tiresias's utterance *When you truly understand that wedding?* is structural presupposition because we can presuppose Oedipus truly understands and knows all about Jocasta's wedding.

Datum 5

Oedipus There is one thing you could say with comprehension…

Creon What is it? *If I know, I will not deny it.*

>> I don't know anything.

This situation happens when Oedipus and Creon were speaking. From this utterance it can be analyzed the relationship as in this proposition:
What is it? If I know, I will not deny it (=p)
I don't know anything. (=q)
p >> q
It can be seen that the presupposition used in this utterance *What is it? If I know, I will not deny it* is counter factual presupposition because we can presuppose Creon don't know anything about what Oedipus should do.

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, 2006).In analysis of presupposition, there are three theorists who had explained about the theory of types of presupposition:

- Gazdar (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, the researcher has found five types of presupposition which applied in Oedipus Rex, they are 14 existential (27%), 5 lexical (9%), 16 structural (30%), 8 factive (15%) and 10 counterfactual (19%). The mostly types of presupposition found in Oedipus Rex 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 Soharti (2106) 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 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 The Reader movie (2009). He found all six types of presupposition which applied in The Reader movie and among them, the type of presupposition mostly used were structural and counter factual. Khalili (2017c) analyzed Presupposition of V for Vendetta. He found all six types of presupposition which applied in V for Vendetta movie and among them, the type of presupposition mostly used were structural and counter factual.

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 Oedipus Rex, 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 1: Types of presuppositions used in Oedipus Rex

No	Types of Presupposition	Frequency
1	Existential	14 (27%)
2	Factive	8 (15%)
3	Counterfactual	10 (19%)
4	Lexical	5 (9%)
5	Structural	16 (30%)
6	Non factive	0 (%)

Conclusion:

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 drama is 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 has found five types of presupposition which applied in Oedipus Rex, they are 14 existential (27%), 5 lexical (9%), 16 structural (30%), 8 factive (15%) and 10 counterfactual (19%).

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.

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