Understanding the Teacher-students' Presuppositions in the Classroom Interaction

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the presuppositions that occur between teachers and students during classroom interactions. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to describe the teachers and students' interactions in the classroom and how the presuppositions can be understood well in their interactions. The data were collected through recording method during the classroom interactions. Descriptive analysis was used to categorize and interpret the data, and lead to the identification of five types of presuppositions: existential, factive, lexical, structural, and non-factive presupposition. The study found that each utterance contained various forms that indicated presuppositions, and each type of presuppositions was not exclusively indicated by a specific word-form. Therefore, categorizing each type of presupposition requires consideration of the contexts of the speaker's discussion, rather than solely looking at the phrase used.

Keywords: *presupposition, implied meaning, interaction, assumption*

INTRODUCTION

Classroom interaction is an activity carried out by a teacher and students in the class. Brown in Resti (2020) stated that classroom interaction is a process of a collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings or ideas between a teacher and students or a student and other students resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other. This interaction occurs because of a problem faced by both participants, then decides to exchange thoughts or share opinions on a topic discussed. According to Magvira (2019), classroom interaction is a reciprocal action between teacher and students in which the teacher's action is influenced by students' reaction. In the teaching-learning process, the interaction mainly happens between a teacher and students in which they have roles as the main components of interaction. It shows that an action that occurs in the classroom during the learning process is related to a goal to convey or to inform something.

The interaction between a teacher and students in which the transferring of knowledge occurs in the learning process is a process of cooperation between teacher and students. But more than that, learning process can be taken successfully, if there are intensive interactions in the classroom in which the teacher is delivering some information and knowledge. Collaboration in the classroom interaction indeed determines how the teacher and students communicate in terms of topics discussed comprehensively (Rahmawati, *et al*, 2021).

When the interactions between teacher and the students take place, teacher can communicate explicitly and sometimes what is meant in an interaction is not conveyed explicitly so that the teacher or students must be able to infer accurately what is conveyed in their communication (Zahro & Susanto, 2022). Therefore, the

communications conducted by a teacher and the students in the class are forms of communication where their communications have certain purposes. Yule (1997) describes how the teacher and the students understand what they assume in their interactions with the utterances as **presupposition**. In addition, Aditya (2014) states that presupposition is something the speaker assumes before uttering an utterance.

The problem between teacher and students in the classroom interaction is how the students can infer the teacher's assumption. As stated before that teacher sometimes conveys what they mean implicitly, what is assumed must be comprehensively interpreted by the students. Therefore, two-way communications between the teacher and students go through misunderstanding or the students try hard to understand what is meant by the teacher with the utterances or what the teacher intends to do with the utterances. Moreover, with this condition, the students must be able to understand performative utterances delivered by the teacher. Austin (1962) stated that performative utterance not only describes the real world but also the social-contextual meaning it describes. Utterances that are spoken by teacher not only can be interpreted one meaning by the students, but it can also be interpreted more. If the interpretation is not conducted comprehensively by the students, the communication between teacher and students becomes ambiguous. To make successful communication in the classroom, the students need to understand the meaning of utterance that uttered by the teacher.

This study focuses on the types of teacher-students' presupposition in the classroom interaction: how the teacher's assumptions can be interpreted well so that the communication during the teaching and learning process can run well.

Teacher-students Classroom Interaction

In teaching and learning process in the classroom, there must be interactions between teacher and students. This interaction is a two-way process between the participants in this process. Hikmah (2019) asserts that interaction is in fact the heart of communication, it is what communication is all about. According to Azizah (2016), the term interaction is made up of two morpheme, namely *inter* and *action*. It is a mutual or reciprocal action or influence. In English language teaching, interaction is used to indicate the language (or action) used to maintain conversation, teach or interact with participants involved in teaching and learning in the classroom.

Pratiwi (2019) emphasizes that the most important key to create an interactive language classroom is the initiation of interaction by the teacher. Teachers must be initiators in the classroom interactions to discuss some topics by using a repertoire of questioning strategies. Celce (2001) argues that classroom interaction as a two-way process between the participants in the language processes becomes the best way to exchange information and knowledge. Furthermore, interaction in the classroom is categorized as the pedagogic interaction which describes the characteristics of teaching and learning process. Heprima (2018) describes the classroom interaction by the following patterns: teacher's initiation, students' response and teacher's follow-up or IRF exchange structure.

Presuppositions and Interaction

Presupposition is one of the key subjects of pragmatics which focuses on

identifying meaning on the basis of assumption from the speaker. Yule (1997) in Ramadhani, (2020) describes presupposition as what a speaker assumes before conveying utterances in which those utterances are firstly processed based on the compositions of the sentences expressing the truth condition. Presupposition can be represented as restricted domains and functions that represent the meanings of lexical entries, constituents, and sentences (Syahril, 2021). In other words, intended meaning or what the speaker assumes, Linda and Susanto (2022) argued, must interpreted based on the contexts where the interactions occur.

The potentially assumed information in an interaction cannot be interpreted based on the compositional meaning of the utterances but the listener must be able to interpret what the speaker assumes with the utterance. For example, the utterance *"Belle's MacBook is Expensive"* is expected to be assumed that *Belle has a MacBook.* This expectation is true when it meets the felicity condition, that is, the speaker believes that Belle has the MacBook.

In addition, presupposition also has the fundamental characteristic, that is, truth under negation. It means that the assumption of the sentence remains true despite the sentence is in negative form. Yule (1997) stated that this case is called constancy under negation. For example, someone says *"Belle's MacBook is Expensive"* or in the negative form *"Belle's MackBook is not expensive"*. The listener presupposes that Belle has a MacBook. It remains true despite both have opposite meanings.

In addition, Griffiths (2006) defines presupposition as the shared background assumptions that are taken for granted when interaction happens. It means that if the participants in their interaction will get compatible impressions of what assumptions are shared between them. Therefore, it is harder to know what is presupposed by the speaker when the interactions happen between strangers (Pustpita, 2019). In other words, the potentially assumed information becomes difficult to understand if the participants are not aware of which aspects or contexts of information are being thought.

Ariyanti *et. al* (2020) explains that the speaker' assumption is what the speaker wants to communicate to the listener that must be interpreted through utterances conveyed. The speaker does not always convey the information in details. This is the listener's task to catch the information negotiated by the speaker (Thoyyibah, 2017).

During the communication, participants are doing something and how the listeners can assume what the speaker means, Yule (1997) classifies presupposition into six types of presupposition. The first is **existential presupposition.** The existential presupposition describes the existence of thing in the possessive phrases when interaction occurs. For example, *Someone stole Jim's motorbike*, in this sentence the speaker assumes that there is someone named *Jim,* and *Jim has a motorbike*. The second is **factive presupposition.** The factive presupposition is the speaker' assumption indicating some information by using words to indicate the fact or something true. It is usually followed by verb such as *know, realize, regret, glad, be sorry, be proud that, be indifferent that, be sad that* and so many. For example, *Andi didn't realize that it was raining outside,* the fact of this sentence is whether Andi realizes or not, it was raining. The third is **lexical presupposition.** Lexical presupposition is presupposition with asserted meaning and usually is

presented in direct utterances involving lexical items, *stop, start* and *again.* For example, the sentence *Rahmat stop smoking after getting sick* presupposes that 'Rahmat used to smoke before'. With the lexical *stop,* the presupposition indicated in the sentence can be understood from the word or lexical meaning. Another example of the lexical containing lexical presupposition is *Emma and Sri are late again*. The lexical *again* indicates that Emma and Sri were late before.

Hence, **structural presupposition** is the speakers' assumption associated with certain structures in sentences in which the assumptions in the structure of the sentence are perceived by the listeners as information that is necessarily true rather than as a question, such as *where did John buy the bike?*. This structure presupposes that is perceived as necessarily true by the listener, that is, *John bought a bike*, rather than as the Wh-questions.

However, presupposition cannot be always assumed to be true. **Non-factive presupposition,** for example, indicates that the structures can be contradictorily perceived on what is said. In other words, what is stated is opposite to the real or it is not true. The verbs like *dream, imagine* and *pretend* can be used to have meaning of presupposition that is not true. For instance, the sentence *I dreamed I was in Japan* or *We imagined we were on the beach* presupposes that the situation is not true because the fact is *I was not in Japan* or *We were not on the beach.*

The last is about **counter-factual presupposition** in which the structures illustrate the situations that are not only true, but they also create the situations that are contrary to facts. The situations are the opposite of what is true. For instance, the sentence *If the students were diligent, they would finish the tasks* presupposes that they are not diligent.

METHOD

This study is designed to a descriptive qualitative research to describe the presuppositions that occur in the classroom interaction between teacher and students. The way the data presented is descriptive data: both oral and written forms taken from recording method and transcription. The data of the research are the dialogue fragments of teacher and students. The data recordings were taken in a private senior high school in Surabaya, one teacher and the eleven-grade students in which they were involved in the classroom interaction.

Data collection techniques are carried out as follows:

1. Recording technique
   According to Moleong (2014), the data can be done by recording. This data is taken with live recording between teacher and students in the classroom interaction and recorded by using handphone vivo Y30i. Recording did at two times; each lesson was recorded for 45 minutes.
2. Observation
   Observation was also conducted to collect the secondary data, in the forms of field notes what teacher and students expressed in the classroom interactions.

The data collected during this study, then, were analyzed with descriptive analysis adapted from Creswell that has been applied by Resyta (2019). Four steps for analyzing the data were conducted through these steps:

1. Organizing and preparing the data for the analysis

Organize and prepare the data from video recording of interaction between teacher and students in the classroom.

2. Transcribing through all the data
   In this step, transcribe the data from teacher-students' classroom interaction become the dialogue fragments.
3. Identifying the data
   Identifying the data from the dialogue fragments of teacher-students' classroom interaction which the utterances in the dialogue contains presupposition to six kinds of presupposition based on Yule theory.
4. Classifying the data
   Classifying each data from six kinds of presupposition based on Yule theory.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis conducted in this study, the study will discuss five types of presupposition found in their interactions in which the focus of the discussion will be on teacher's assumptions interpreted by the students in the classroom.

a. Existential Presupposition

The table 1 is about the data related to existential presuppositions that take place in the classroom when the teacher and students are involved in classroom interaction. In this situation, the teacher committed teaching by requesting the students to open their book. The dialogue in fragment 1 *Please open your book page 69* can be interpreted that the students can understand what the teacher means by saying the utterance. In this point, it can be pointed that the teacher assumed that the students have the books and the books have a page 69. What has been assumed by the teacher can be understood well by students by giving the response *Alright ma'am*.

What has been explained by Yule (1997) is that the possessive construction 'your book' >> 'You have a book' is interpreted to be committed to the existence of entities named. That also happens to fragmentation 2 in table 1 in which the present of entities 'your book' in the utterance *You didn't bring your book?* becomes significant to the teacher's assumption about what is possessed by the students.

Table 1. Existential Presupposition

Code	Dialogue
Fragmentation 1	Teacher: Ok students, *please open your book page 69.* Student: alright ma'am. Teacher: W*hich chapter* we will continue in discussion today? Student: In chapter 5.
Fragmentation 2	Teacher: Wisnu, where will you go? Student: I want to move to the front. Teacher: *you didn't bring your book.* Student: yes, ma'am. I forgot

Ramadhani (2020) asserted that existential presuppositions involve the assumption of the existence or non-existence of entities and can be conveyed through expletive there such as 'there is' or 'there are'. What has been conveyed by Ramadhani that the use of 'expletive there' conveying existential presupposition is not found in this study.

b. Factive Presupposition

The data in table 2 describe the context of factive presuppositions. The dialogue focuses on the first utterance of the teacher during the classroom interactions. The situation of dialogue is about the lateness of the teacher coming to the class. After greeting the students, the teacher apologized for being late. The utterance *I am sorry for coming late* presupposes that the teacher was late. This situation can be interpreted from what the fact occurs. Based on Yule (1997) theory, a factive presupposition considers the truth in which it is identified by the use of certain form or phrase in the utterance, as indicated in table 2. The word 'sorry' signals and is treated as a fact in that utterance. Consequently, the expression *I am sorry for coming late* presupposes the fact that *I am late.*

Table 2. Factive Presupposition

Code	Dialogue
Fragmentation 3	Teacher: Assalamualaikum, *I am sorry for coming late* because I'm still talking with your homeroom teacher. Student: No problem ma'am. Teacher: Did you know what homeroom teacher means? Student: Wali kelas. Teacher: Yes, that's right wali kelas.

In addition, there are some verbs, Crystal (2017) conveyed, that can be used in the factive presupposition that presupposes the truth of their complement clauses. Furthermore, *Levinson* (1983) asserted that factive presupposition can be identified from factive verbs, such as 'know', 'discover', or 'realize'. This means that the proposition is assumed to be true as presupposed by the speaker. Based on the context of dialogue in table 2, the teacher apologized to the students because she was late to come to the class. The utterance *I am sorry for coming late* is classified in factive presupposition because the assumed information is true., that is, *I am late.* What is communicated by the teacher is about the lateness as the fact that is negotiating to the students. The students can understand what is assumed by the teacher in their interaction by giving the right response 'No problem ma'am'

c. Lexical Presupposition

The aspect of lexical presupposition is about the use of a word in an utterance in which this word can be used to interpret the speaker's assumption as a whole. Some data in table 3 describe how the words *again* and *start* on the teacher's utterances can be interpreted as what the teacher assumes in the interactions with the students. The fragmentation 4 in which the teacher says *Only Erlangga is absent again today?* can be inferred that *Erlangga was absent before*. This inference is

based on the lexical *again* in that utterance. Therefore, the lexical *again* on utterances in fragmentation 5 and 6 can be interpreted in the same way as what occurs on fragmentation 4. The utterance *Ok, I would explain again* presupposes that *the speaker explained something before*. To the same degree, this way can be applied to the utterance 6 *Who wants to come forward again?* The speaker's assumption is that *someone came forward before*. The lexical *again* becomes the asserted form that another meaning can be understood.

Table 3. Lexical Presupposition

Code	Dialogue
Fragmentation 4	Teacher: O*nly Erlangga is absent again today?* Why? Student: He requested permission ma'am. Teacher: Ok, I will check the attendance first.
Fragmentation 5	Teacher: If you found it difficult to read the ending -ed so just read the V1. Did you learn this lesson in X grade? Student: No ma'am. Teacher: Maybe you forgot about this lesson. O*k, I would explain again.*
Fragmentation 6	Teacher: *Who wants to come forward again?* Student: I'm ma'am. Teacher: Ok, please make example with easy sentences first.
Fragmentation 7	Teacher: Y*ou should start reading the text before answering the questions*. Student: Yes, ma'am. Teacher: Which paragraph shows your answer? Student: In the second paragraphs ma'am.

In different situation of lexical presupposition, the speaker's assumption can be identified from a particular verb used in the utterance. For example, in fragmentation 7, the use of verb *start* in *You should start reading the text before answering the questions* can be said as a form with asserted meaning that is conventionally interpreted so that the speaker's assumption can be understood (Devi *at al*, 2020). In this context, the utterance in fragmentation 7 brings the speaker's assumption as *You didn't read the text before.*

d. Structural Presupposition

The point of structural presuppositions is about the use of certain sentence structures that can be analyzed to treat information as presupposed to be true and to be accepted by the listener (Yule, 1997). The data table 4 portray how the speaker's assumption can be interpreted well by the students when they have interaction during the teaching and learning process. What can be inferred from teacher's utterance in terms of presupposition is that the teacher communicated about the events. Therefore, the teacher's assumption of the utterance *How many times did the events occur in the text?* can be 'The events occur many times.' The assumption is part of communication conveyed by the teacher that must be interpreted and be accepted by the students.

Table 4. Structural Presupposition

Code	Dialogue
Fragmentation 8	Teacher: *How many times do the events occur in the text?* Student: Two ma'am. Teacher: That's right.

Based on the fragmentation 8, according Yule (1997), the listeners or the students can believe the information and also accept the information that is necessarily true, rather than it is a question asked by the teacher to the students. The true information that is negotiated by the teacher to the students is an assumption believed before conveying an utterance, and hence is accepted by the students by answering the question. Therefore, the truth of the presupposition appears to be accepted, that is, *The events occur many times.*

e. Non-factive Presupposition

The data in table 5 illustrate the context of presupposition taking place during the interaction between teacher and students in which the teacher discussed irregular verb during classroom interaction. What is the problem in this interaction? The teacher's utterance *Maybe you forgot, but I hope you have already understood the irregular verb* brings presupposition that must be interpreted by the students. This utterance comprises presupposition that is not true or it is called non-factive presupposition. Based on the data, it can be interpreted that the students did not understand the irregular verb. In other words, the utterance '…, but I hope you have already understood the irregular verb' presupposes 'You have not already understood irregular verb'. The verb 'hope' is perceived as a verb that can be used to identify the assumption that is not true. The expectation of the teacher is that all students have already understood the irregular verb, but it is beyond the teacher expectation in which all students have not already understood it.

Table 4. Non Factive Presupposition

Code	Dialogue
Fragmentation 9	Teacher: What is meant by irregular verb? Student: I didn't know ma'am. Teacher: Did you learn this lesson in grade X? Student: No ma'am. Teacher: *Maybe you forgot, but I hope you have already understood the irregular verb.*

Levinson (1983) stated that non-factive presupposition do not have a necessary connection to the truth of the presupposition being expressed and are often dependent on context and the speaker's intentions. What is stated by Levinson in terms of the context of the verb 'hope' used in data of fragmentation 9 that may be true, that is, the students have already understood the irregular verb. Non-factive presupposition are subject to negotiation between speaker and listener and may change based on context.

CONCLUSION

A classroom interaction is a part of teaching and learning processes and an activity that involves a teacher and the students in negotiating information or knowledge. This is a two-way interaction between a teacher and students in which both of them try to comprehend each other in their communication. Therefore, based on this study, the teacher and students' interactions can run well as what they expect if they are able to infer accurately what is conveyed in their communication. One of the aspects that must be considered is about the understanding what the speaker assumes in the utterances.

There are five types of presupposition found in this study describing how the teacher's assumptions can be understood by the students during their classroom interactions. The assumed information is not conveyed explicitly by the teacher. Consequently, the students must be able to comprehensively infer the teacher' assumptions as parts of the communication. However, to understand presuppositions cannot be apart from the contexts involved in the communication because classroom interactions are two-way communications.

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