

A Study of Presupposition and Conversational Implicatures in the Comic Strip of “The Diary of a Wimpy Kid”

Helena Verusha Ali¹

Dini Hidayati²

Yanuaris Yanu Dharmawan³

¹ Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia, Indonesia

² Universitas Panca Sakti Bekasi, Indonesia

³ Universitas Bandar Lampung, Indonesia

¹ helenaverushaali@gmail.com

² dinisyarief@gmail.com

³ yanu@ubl.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims at exploring the application of presupposition and conversational implicature in communication within comic strips from pragmatics field of study as proposed by Yule, (2006). The research design of this study is a qualitative design. The data were utterances and sentences in "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid" comic strip. This study reveals that there were four types of presuppositions implemented by the characters in “The Diary of A Wimpy Kid” comic, namely counter-factual presupposition, existential presupposition, factive presupposition, and lexical presupposition. Additionally, the research revealed that the characters in the comic employ two distinct forms of conversational implicatures: generalized conversational implicatures and particularized conversational implicatures.

Keywords: *implicature, presupposition, pragmatics*

Introduction

Language serves as a fundamental tool for conveying messages, enabling individuals to express their ideas, emotions, opinions, and desires, whether through verbal or written means. According to Tarigan (2015), language is a crucial facet of human communication, serving as a vital means of interacting with other individuals. As such, language plays an essential role in facilitating successful communication. Wijana (2009) identifies three main functions of language: facilitating cooperation, communication, and identification, with communication being particularly significant in easing the conversational process. Within the context of communication, presupposition refers to the hearer's assumption of the interlocutor's message concerning the topic of conversation (Yule, 1996).

Presupposition and conversational implicature are areas of interest in pragmatics, a branch of linguistics that concerns the study of meaning in context, particularly the use of language in communication. Presupposition entails the speaker's expression of an event before uttering a statement, and it is a reflection of the speaker's intention (Yule, 2006). Implicature, on the other hand, refers to the meaning conveyed by the speaker that is not explicitly stated (Horn, 2006). Effective communication occurs when both parties understand the message, and there are no barriers. However, in certain instances, an utterance may "communicate more than is said" (Yule, 1996, p. 40), requiring the speaker to communicate the meaning through implicatures, while the listener interprets or infers the meaning.

Implicature is a noteworthy area of interest in pragmatics, defined as a component of speaker meaning that represents an aspect of what is intended in a speaker's utterance, beyond what is explicitly stated (Horn, 2006). It can be understood as unsaid meaning. Furthermore, when speakers communicate, they often intend to convey more than what they express directly, resulting in more effective communication (Yule, 2006). However, miscommunication is a common concern in which the message's intended meaning fails to convey its purpose or the listener misunderstands the speaker's intended message. It is worth noting that the capacity to comprehend the fundamental aspects of a speaker's message holds greater significance in the realm of language utilization (Prasatyo, B. A., Ali, H. V., & Hidayati, D. 2023). Therefore, this paper aims to explore the application of presupposition and conversational implicature in communication within comic strips.

Research questions and objectives

Previous research on presupposition and conversational implicature has primarily focused on analyzing the utterances of EFL teacher-learners (Nurjati & Andaty, 2016) and political speeches (Suryana & Simatupang, 2022), attracting considerable attention from numerous researchers. However, few studies have investigated presupposition and conversational implicatures in the context of comic strips. Against this backdrop, this study aims to address the following research questions;

- 1) What types of presuppositions are found in the comic strip "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid"?
- 2) What types of conversational implicatures are found in the comic strip "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid"?

The primary objective of this study is to identify the various types of presupposition and conversational implicatures in "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid" comic strip using Yule's (2006) presupposition and Grice's (1975) conversational implicature theoretical frameworks. The analysis aims to shed light on the application of presupposition and conversational implicatures in two comic strips of "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid."

Review of Literature

Overview of Previous studies on Presupposition and Conversational Implicatures

Numerous studies have examined presupposition and implicatures, including works by Suryana & Simatupang (2022), Qrdawi & Ruqiayah (2022), and Fitrianti & Mahmud (2022). Suryana & Simatupang (2022) conducted an investigation of presuppositions and implicatures in Michelle Obama's speech, utilizing data from her 2020 utterances broadcasted on national media. Their findings identified four types of implicatures employed in her speech.

Second, Qrdawi & Ruqiayah (2022) explored conversational implicatures in a novel by Ernest Hemingway, utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach. Their research uncovered two types of conversational implicatures present in the novel: generalized conversational implicatures and specific conversational implicatures.

Lastly, Fitrianti & Mahmud (2022) examined conversational implicature in the utterances of the primary character in the film "I Care a Lot," also employing a descriptive qualitative methodology. Their analysis revealed that the character used 33 conversational implicature utterances, including 21 generalized conversational

implicature utterances and 12 particularized conversational implicature utterances. Additionally, out of 225 utterances by the main character in the film, 34 statements were found to violate the maxims.

Pragmatics

The inquiry regarding pragmatics constitutes a subfield within the domain of linguistics, dedicated to the exploration of meaning in the context of language usage. Levinson (1983) postulates that pragmatics examines the interplay between language and context, a fundamental component for deciphering language comprehension, which necessitates the drawing of inferences to bridge the gap between expressed content and shared assumptions or prior discourse. Pragmatics serves as a means to resolve potential miscommunication between interlocutors.

Yule (1996) offers a complementary perspective, asserting that pragmatics scrutinizes speakers' intended meanings. He characterizes pragmatics as the study of speaker meaning, contextual meaning, the conveyance of additional information beyond the explicit message, and the articulation of relational distance. Moreover, Yule (1996) posits that pragmatics explores the connection between linguistic structures and their users. He contends that the advantage of adopting a pragmatic approach to language study includes a heightened understanding of individuals' intended meanings, presuppositions, objectives, and the diverse communicative actions they execute through speech. Leech (1993) similarly delineates pragmatics as the investigation of meaning as it pertains to speech situations, signifying that pragmatic inquiry delves into the semantic aspects of human language while accounting for the circumstances under which speech transpires.

In light of the aforementioned theoretical perspectives, it can be deduced that the study of pragmatics primarily concerns the analysis of speakers' intended meanings within their utterances. This entails deciphering the significance of language within specific contexts and the manner in which contextual factors influence communication. Pragmatics necessitates an examination of how speakers structure their discourse in relation to their conversational partners, temporal and spatial parameters, and the prevailing circumstances. Consequently, pragmatic inquiry concentrates on the investigation of speakers' intended meanings in relation to contextual elements, scrutinizing noteworthy utterances and distinctive situations, while emphasizing the myriad ways in which diverse social contexts are encapsulated.

Presupposition

Presupposition refers to the underlying assumptions a speaker believes to be true before making an utterance (Yue, 1996). Hudson (2000) posits that presupposition is considered true within a sentence that conveys additional information, maintaining its status as a necessary assumption regardless of whether the utterance is expressed as an assertion, denial, or question. Furthermore, presupposition can be associated with specific lexical items or grammatical features within the utterance. Richards (1992) conceptualizes presupposition as the knowledge a speaker or writer assumes the recipient of the message already possesses.

Yule (2006) asserts that presupposition is closely linked to the utilization of numerous words, phrases, and structures. These linguistic forms serve as indicators of potential presupposition, which can only transform into actual presupposition within the context of speaker interaction. In this regard, he proposes six types of presupposition which are as follows;

Counter-factual presupposition

Counterfactual presupposition alludes to instances where the meaning of what is presupposed is contradicted by reality. This type of presupposition suggests that the information following the "if" clause is false. For example, the statement "If I were rich" implies "I am not rich." Consequently, counterfactual presupposition signifies that the presupposed information is not true.

Existential presupposition

Existential presupposition pertains to the underlying assumption of existence, typically present in possessive constructions and definite noun phrases (Yule, 2006). For instance, consider the phrase "Mom's new dress." In this context, it is generally expected that the speaker presupposes the existence of their mother, who has a new and potentially beautiful dress.

Factive presupposition

Factive presupposition encompasses the conveyed information following verbs like "realize," "know," or phrases involving the verb "aware" that can be regarded as factual (Yule, 2006). For example, in the statement "She did not realize she was sick," it is presupposed that she was indeed sick. The use of the verb "realize" signifies the factuality of the utterance.

Lexical presupposition

Lexical presupposition involves employing a particular linguistic form with an asserted meaning, which is conventionally interpreted with an accompanying presupposition (non-asserted) (Yule, 2006). For example, the statement "He stopped drinking" implies that "he used to drink."

Structural presupposition

Structural presupposition deals with the treatment of information as presupposed and accepted as fact by the listener (Yule, 2006). An example of this would be the question, "Where did you buy the car?" which implies that "you bought a car."

Non-factive presupposition

Non-factive presupposition refers to the underlying assumption deemed not to be true, often associated with verbs such as "dream," "imagine," and "pretend" (Yule, 2006). For instance, in the statement "I dreamed that I was rich," the presupposition is that "I was not rich."

Conversational Implicatures

Yule (1996) posits that implicature is intrinsically linked to the cooperative principle in dialogues, with conversational implicature representing the inferred meaning expected to arise from communication. Consequently, conversational implicature may emerge when a speaker is perceived as uncooperative during an interaction. Horn (2006) suggests that conversational implicature embodies a concept manifested in the way people communicate, characterized as a notion implied in speech but not explicitly conveyed. For instance: Helena: "I hope you brought the bread and jam."

Mohammad: "Ah, I just brought the bread."

In this exchange, Mohammad communicates additional meaning through a conversational implicature (Yule, 1996, p. 40).

Conversational implicatures can be categorized into generalized and particularized conversational implicatures (Yule, 1996). Grundy (2000) asserts that generalized conversational implicature does not necessitate special knowledge or inference for a listener to grasp the supplementary meaning being conveyed. In other words, generalized conversational implicature is discernible in a conversation independent of

contextual factors. On the other hand, Grice (1975) contends that particularized conversational implicature transpires within a specific context. As such, particularized conversational implicatures arise due to certain contextual elements within the speech event, typically stemming from sentences employed in the dialogue.

Analysis of existing research on presupposition and conversational implicatures in "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid"

To identify the types of presuppositions and conversational implicatures in this study, the taxonomy of presuppositions suggested by Yule (2006) and the taxonomy of conversational implicatures proposed by Grice (1975) were employed. Both the taxonomies proposed by Yule (2006) and Grice (1975) were appropriate for addressing the research questions concerning the types of presuppositions and conversational implicatures and the dominant types used in "The Diary of A Wimpy Kid" comic strip.

Method

Research Design

The research design utilized in this study is descriptive qualitative research. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), descriptive qualitative research involves collecting data in the form of words and pictures and analyzing them as closely as possible to the original form in which they were recorded or transcribed. This means that the research data were obtained through careful observation of the natural setting where the research was conducted.

Subject of the Research

The primary data subject for this study was the utterances in "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid" comic strip. The focus of this study was to identify and explain the types of presuppositions and conversational implicatures used in the utterances and sentences of the comic strip.

Data collection methods and Instrument

The data collection process involved several stages, beginning with the documentation method. According to Arikunto (2002), the documentation method is a technique used to collect data about variables or things in the form of notes, transcriptions, books, newspapers, and magazines. In this study, comic strips served as the primary source of data.

The data collection process involved two steps. The first step was reading and selecting the utterances and sentences in comic strip, which was used to comprehend the utterances from the comic strip. The second step involved collecting the data into a data sheet, which was utilized to code the utterances from the comic strip to seek the similarities of the types of presupposition and conversational implicatures for further analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures and Techniques

The data analysis process for this study followed the method stages of examining and analyzing the data, classifying, and reporting on the findings, as outlined by Kvale (1994). The first step involved coding the data from the comic strips for further analysis, with the researcher reviewing and analyzing all coded data in this step. The second step entailed classifying the data into two sub-categories: presuppositions and conversational implicatures, which were identified from the transcription of the comic strip using the taxonomy of Yule's (2006) taxonomy for presuppositions and Grice's (1975) taxonomy for conversational implicatures. The third step encompassed all the coded data from step two to the conceptual frameworks. In addition to the narrative, the

description included the researcher's interpretation of the data, which was then presented descriptively.

Results

Presupposition analysis found in the Comic Strip of “The Diary of a Wimpy Kid”

The findings are illustrated in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. The types of presupposition used in the comic.

No.	Types of presupposition	Frequencies
1.	Counter Factual presupposition	12
2.	Existential presupposition	4
3.	Factive presupposition	29
4.	Lexical presupposition	5

From the data in Table 1 above, the findings show four types of presupposition used in the comic strip: counter factual presupposition, factive presupposition, lexical presupposition, and existential presupposition.

Counter- Factual Presupposition



Figure 1

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Extract 1 (See appendices 2b, No.24)

Utterances: Rowley: “I wish Chirag was here. Oh, how he loves chocolate chip cookies.”

The utterances in figure 1 showed that Rowley, Greg's best friend describes his sadness due to Chirag's absence. From the situation, it could be presupposed as (>> *Chirag was not attending the school*) or (>> *Chirag was not there at the lunch table*). The function of Rowley's utterances was to show the audience the feeling of sadness due to Chirag's favorite chocolate chip cookies being served on the menu of today's lunch. Another sample from the findings of counter-factual presupposition is presented in Figure 2 as follows:

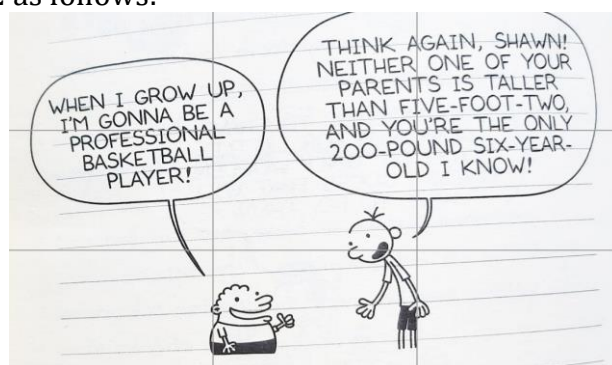


Figure 2

Copyright Puffinbook.com (*A wimpy kid's comic*)

Extract 2 (*See appendices 2b, No.53*)

Utterances: Chirag: "When I grow up, I'm gonna be a professional basketball player."

The utterances in figure 2 showed that Chirag describes his ambition when he grows up. From the utterances, it could be presupposed as (>> *Chirag already a basketball now*) or (>> *Chirag got the motivation to want to be a professional basketball*). The function of Chirag's utterances was to show the audience the imagined being a professional basketball player. The use of counter factual presupposition in the comic strip includes 10 times of frequency.

Existential Presupposition

Extract 3 (*See appendices 2b, No.10*)

Utterances: Greg: "Rowley's family always traveling"

The utterances in extract 3 showed that Greg, the main character, tries to describe his jealousy since his friend Rowley always travels. From the situation, it could be presupposed as (>> *Rowley's family is wealthy*), (>> *Rowley's family has never been in town*), or (>> *Rowley's family always took his son away*). The function of Greg's utterances is to show the audience the feeling of how lonely to spend the summer without his best friend, Rowley. Another sample from the findings of existential presupposition is presented in extract four below as follows:

Extract 4 (*See appendices 2b, No.59*)

Utterances: Greg: "That was Rowley's father"

The utterances in extract 4 showed that Greg, the main character, was surprised since Larry's father was about to see him during his naughty duty. From the situation, it could be presupposed as (>> *Rowley has a father*) or (>> *Rowley's father has an attitude toward Greg*). The function of Greg's utterances was to show the audience how surprised to find out Rowley's father was in front of him. The types of existential presupposition were used in the comic strip six times frequently.

Factive Presupposition

Exact 5 (*See appendices 2b, No.19*)

Utterances: Greg: "But then, I realized he's just making sure he's out of our house for Rodrick band practice."

The utterances in extract 5 showed that Greg, the main character, tries to describe his brother, Rodrick, that he always has ways of getting out of the house, even though he stays grounded. From the situation, it could be presupposed as (>> *Rodrick has his excuses to go out of the house*) or (>> *Rodrick out of the house to practice his band*). The function of Greg's utterances was to show the audience how smart his brother Rodrick is to still have his band practice, even when punished by his mother not to go out. Another sample from the findings of factive presupposition is presented in extract six below as follows:

Exact 6 (*See appendices 2b, No.52*)

Utterances: Greg: "I knew what it feels like to be the most popular kid at school."

The utterances in extract 6 showed that Greg, the main character, tries to show off how famous he is at school. From the utterances, it could be presupposed as (>> *Greg is popular at school*) or (>> *he feels famous*). The function of Greg's utterances was to show the audience the feeling of how famous he is at school. The use of factive presupposition in the comic strip was the dominant use by the main character that, include for 29 times frequency.

Lexical Presupposition

Extract 7 (See appendices 2b, No.12)

Utterances: Greg: "He didn't believe me anymore"

The utterances in extract 7 showed that Greg, the main character, describes his disappointment because his father no longer believes him. From the situation, it could be presupposed as (>> *his father used to believe him*). The function of Greg's utterances was to show the audience the feeling of sadness due to his father's disbelieving in his son. Another sample from the findings of lexical presupposition is presented in extract eight below as follows:

Extract 8 (See appendices 2b, No. 60)

Utterances: Greg: "Mom stopped talking to him"

Conversational Implicature analysis found in the Comic Strip of "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid"

Table 2 The types of conversational implicatures used in the comic.

No.	Conversational Implicatures	Frequencies
1.	Generalized implicatures	9
2.	Particularized implicatures	5

Generalized conversational implicature

The sample from the findings of generalized conversational implicature is presented in Figure 3 as follows:

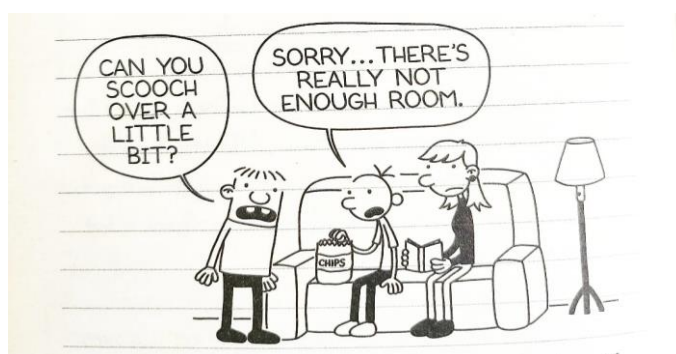


Figure 3

Copyright Puffinbook.com (A wimpy kid's comic)

Extract 9 (See appendices 2b, No.5)

Utterances: Rowley: "Can you scooch over a little bit?"

Greg: "Sorry...there's really not enough room"

In extract 9 above, it can be concluded that Rowley's utterance "*Can you scooch over a little bit?*" can be understood by the listener because the utterance doesn't require a specific context that the listener must understand. Rowley's utterance is generalized conversational implicature because Greg can directly conclude the utterance that Rowley wants to sit beside them. Another sample from the findings of generalized conversational implicature is presented in Figure 4 as follows:



Figure 4

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Extract 10 (See appendices 2b, No.23)

Utterances: Greg: "Is this how you do it?"

Dad: "You need to be using a clear rag, son!"

In extract 10 above, it can be concluded that Greg's question, "*Is this how you do it*" can be understood by the listener because the utterance doesn't require a specific context that must be understood by the listener. Greg's utterance is generalized conversational implicature because the utterance can be directly concluded by his dad that Greg tried to clean the window, but he has no clue how to clean it.

Particularized conversational implicatures

The sample from findings of particularized conversational implicature is presented in the Figure 5 as follows;

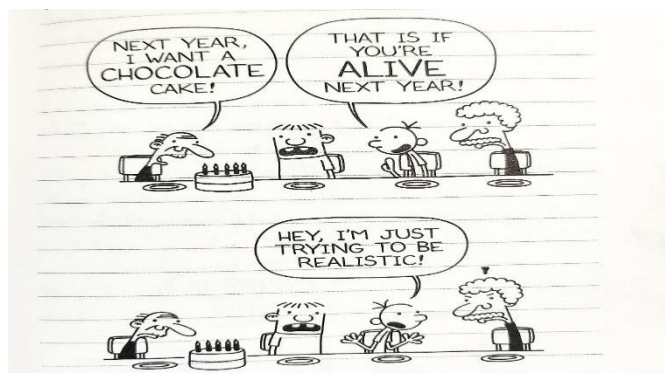


Figure 5

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Extract 11 (See appendices 2b, No.35)

Utterances: Chirag: "Next year, I want a chocolate cake"

Greg: "That is if you're alive next year"

In extract 11 above, Chirag and Greg's conversation is included in the type of particularized conversational implicature because Greg must see data and also evidence of the chocolate cake that Chirag talked about. The conversation occurred when Greg found some evidence that the cake on the table was not a chocolate cake. Thus, Greg's utterance, "*that is, if you're alive next year,*" indicates that Greg must know the specific

context. Another sample from the findings of particularized conversational implicature is presented in Figure 6 as follows:



Figure 6

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Extract 12 (See appendices 2b, No.47)

Utterances: Greg: "Did you see any shark fighting giant tarantulas on your safari? "

Rowley: "No. And Sharks don't fight Tarantulas"

Greg: "Well, at wild kingdom, they do."

In extract 12 above, Greg and Rowley's conversation is included in the type of Particularized conversational implicature because Rowley also pays attention to Greg's utterances as the data and evidence of the chocolate cake that Chirag talked about. The conversation occurred when Greg found evidence from the book that Greg held. Thus, Rowley's utterance "*No. And Sharks don't fight Tarantulas*" indicates that Rowley knows the specific context.

Discussion

Interpretation of the results

Based on the theoretical framework of Yule (2006) and the purpose of the study above, the research showed four types of presupposition used in the comic strip of "The Diary of A Wimpy Kid," which include presupposition of counter-factual, factive, lexical, and existential. Based on the explanation above, the types of presupposition found in the comic "A Diary of a Wimpy Kid" include counter-factual presupposition, existential presupposition, factive presupposition, and lexical presupposition. The factive presupposition appears more often to be applied in the comic strip. These findings were contradicted by Suryana & Simatupang's (2022)" study that investigated the presupposition of the Michele Obama speech. They revealed that Michele Obama applied non-factive presupposition in her speech. Thus, their study contradicts the findings of this study, which they only found non-factive as the types of presupposition used in Michele Obama's speech.

Based on the theoretical framework of Grice (1975) and the purpose of the study above, the research also showed two types of conversational implicatures used in the comic strip "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid," which include generalized conversational implicatures and particularized conversational implicatures. In this study, a type of conversational implicature referred to as the generalized conversational implicature was identified. This implicature occurs in the absence of any specific contextual elements, because it relies on a general discourse context. Consequently, the listener does not require any particular contextual understanding to grasp the meaning of the dialogue.

Another type of conversational implicature identified in this study is the particularized conversational implicature. Unlike the generalized conversational implicature, this type requires the listener or speaker to have contextual knowledge to fully understand the meaning of the communication. Furthermore, for effective communication to occur, someone must assist the listener in understanding what is being said.

Implication

The findings of this research can serve as a valuable reference for the teaching and learning process. It is recommended that individuals interested in researching presuppositions or implicatures should have a linguistic background or a concentration in language to gain a better understanding and study of pragmatics, especially in presuppositions, which deal with implied meanings that are not as easily understood as literal meanings.

However, this study has several limitations, particularly in explaining the types of presupposition and conversational implicatures. Further research could focus on specific taxonomies to provide more specific results and a deeper understanding of presupposition and the study of implicatures.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research identified four types of presuppositions implemented by the characters in "The Diary of A Wimpy Kid" comic, namely counter-factual presupposition, existential presupposition, factive presupposition, and lexical presupposition. However, it is worth noting that these results are limited by the fact that the characters in the comic exhibit various personalities. Further, the study found two types of conversational implicatures utilized by the characters in the comic: generalized conversational implicatures and particularized conversational implicatures.

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