Presupposition Analysis of Twitter Hate Comments towards Meghan Markle at Queen Elizabeth II's Funeral

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
hate comments; presupposition; twitter	On September 8, 2022, BBC News announced the Queen's death at the age of 96 at Balmoral Castle, Scotland. Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, who were present at Queen Elizabeth II's funeral, became public attention and invited netizens' opinions on various social media. This study attempts to analyze the types of presupposition and the mostly used type of presupposition on Twitter hate comments addressed to Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex. Presupposition deals with a relationship between sentences or propositions and interpretation. The data of this research were taken from comments collected from five tweets with a large number of replies. They were analyzed by using Yule's (1996) types of presupposition. This research used descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. The result of data analysis reveals that existential presupposition is mostly found in the data. This is because the hate comments towards Meghan Markle used definite/indefinite noun phrases to represent the assumptions of the writer of the comments.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the world has just been shocked by the news of leaving Queen Elizabeth II. On 8 September 2022, BBC News announced the Queen's death at Balmoral aged 96 (https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-61585886). The state funeral service was then held on September 19 at Westminster Abbey. Prince Harry and Meghan Markle who were present at the Queen's funeral then became public attention where they looked the most prominent and invited netizens' opinions and blasphemy on various social media, one of them is Twitter.

Twitter is one of the most widely used social media because of its open nature by providing a space for users to share information. Currently Twitter is rated as an online platform used globally (Issac & Ember, 2016). Twitter, which is basically a place for users to freely express their opinions, sometimes makes it seem as if they have no limit for free speech. The right to free speech is almost out of control for certain users to express hateful comments, racism, harassment, and other violations directed at certain other parties. Such comments can be classified as hate speech. Twitter defines hate speech as content that triggers to incite and provoke individuals, organizations, or groups based on race, ethnicity, country, religion, skin color, or other status related to certain laws (Twitter, 2017). From this definition it can be concluded that the target of hate speech is anyone, be it ordinary people or famous people.

In this study, the researchers focus on Twitter hate comments addressed to Meghan Markle at the Queen's funeral. People who may have hated her from the start began to find any fault of Meghan at the funeral, such as comments about clothes deemed inappropriate, about her fake crying, holding hands, and about how Meghan shouldn't have attended the Queen's funeral. The comments directed at Meghan Markle are not only scornful of how Meghan was at the queen's funeral, but also always involve her old scandals.

Therefore, these comment writers have assumptions of what become the case before making an utterance or writing their comments. This refers to presupposition. Presupposition is a relationship between sentences or propositions and interpretation. Potts (2014) stated that the presupposition of an utterance is a piece of information that the speaker assumes to be meaningful in context. Whereas Yule (1996, p. 25) describes a presupposition as something that is assumed by the speaker to be the case prior to utterances, not a sentence.

Meanwhile, Yule (1996) divided presupposition into six types as follows:

1. **Existential presupposition** is a presupposition used to show the speaker's assumptions about the existence of entities. It is generally assumed to be present in a definite noun phrase.

2. **Factive presupposition** is assumption about whether something is true. it usually is characterized by the use of verbs such as *know*, *realize*, *want*, *aware*, *glad*, and *regret.*

3. **Lexical presupposition** occurs when the speaker uses one word/form, the speaker can act as if the other meaning will be understood by the listener. This presupposition is characterized by the use of lexical items such as *stop*, *start*, and *again*.

4. **Structural presupposition** is the assumption of a certain sentence structure in which the delivery of information is considered as truth. It is usually indicated by the use of the 'WH-question' construction in English.

5. **Non-factive presupposition** is the assumption that something is not true or not a fact. This presupposition is characterized by the use of verbs such as *dream*, *imagine*, and *pretend*.

6. **Counterfactual presupposition** is an assumption that shows what is conveyed is not only untrue but also contradictory or the opposite of what is true. It is usually indicated by the presence of utterances containing IF-clauses.

There are several previous studies on presupposition analysis, some of which were conducted by Aini & Ariyanti (2021), Makasiahe (2020), and Wahana, et al (2021). The three studies analyzed the type of presupposition using Yule's presupposition theory. While the data used in each study is varied, namely speech, Twitter account, and news. The difference between this study and previous research is the use of data in a different form of written text and more updated topic, namely the analysis of presupposition on Twitter hate comments towards Meghan Markle at the Queen's funeral. While the theory used in the data analysis is similar, so it can be said that this research is a development of existing research.

Thus, this study is aimed to analyze the types of presuppositions and the mostly used type of presupposition that can be found in hate comments towards Meghan Markle. The researchers took data in the form of hate comments collected from five tweets with a large number of replies. The researchers took this topic because the researchers are interested in analyzing hate comment, even more, the topic itself is related to the death of Queen Elizabeth II, which is still a hot topic. In addition, the researchers took data from Twitter because the researchers could find more hate comments towards Meghan Markle on Twitter.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative method as a research design. The data used in this method is descriptive data. Descriptive data are those found in written words or utterances from speakers or writers to be analyzed (Sudaryanto, 2015). The data of this study consist of written texts, specifically the hate comments towards Meghan Markle on Twitter. The researchers collected the data from five popular tweets of different

Twitter users with a large number of replies from September 14 to 19, 2022. In collecting the data, the researchers did the following steps: 1) reading tweets that match research needs, 2) sorting comments to be categorized as hate comments, and 3) coding each collected comment. After that, the researchers began to analyze the data by identifying the context of the data, classifying the types of presupposition found in each comment by using Yule (1996) presupposition theory, and the last step is drawing conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The data collected revealed there are 219 total presupposition data on Twitter hate comments towards Meghan Markle. The results of this research show that all types of presuppositions were found. It was also found that existential presupposition was the most dominant type with a percentage of 59.3%. While the least found is counterfactual presupposition with a percentage of 3.8%. These results can be seen in Table 1:

Table 1 Results of the Study

Type of Presupposition	Number	Percentage
Existential Presupposition	118	53.9%
Lexical Presupposition	25	11.4%
Factive Presupposition	40	18.2%
Structural Presupposition	15	6.8%
Non-Factive Presupposition	13	5.9%
Counterfactual Presupposition	8	3.8%
	219	**100%**

The following section elaborates the discussion of the results.

Discussion

In this section, the researchers present the data analysis of the presupposition types by using several examples from the data.

1. Existential Presupposition

Existential presuppositions in this research deal with the assumptions of the writers represented by possessive pronouns and definite/indefinite noun phrases.

Excerpt 1

Her attendance is a gross insult to the Crown, the British peoples. (@alisxxxx_xxss)

Presupposition:

  a. Someone (she) attends something.
  b. An insult exists.
  c. The Crown exists.
  d. The British peoples exist.

The utterance above contains an existential presupposition because the writer mentioned the existence of an entity with a trigger of possessive pronoun in *"her attendance"*. The word "her" in the hate comment refers to Meghan Markle, while "attendance" refers to Meghan's presence at the Queen's funeral. In

addition, it can be seen that there are other existential presuppositions with the use of indefinite and definite noun phrases such as *"a gross insult"*, *"the Crown"*, and *"the British peoples"*.

2. Lexical Presupposition

Excerpt 2

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Will she go home afterwards!! Hope so! (@andrxxxxn7)
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Presupposition:

  a. She isn't at home.
  b. certain event has been mentioned. (funeral)

The context in the comment is that the writer of the comment hopes that "she" (Meghan Markle) will return home after attending the funeral and not stay in the UK with the Royal Family. Therefore, it can be said that the words *"go home"* and *"afterwards"* in the utterances interpret that other meanings are understood by the audience. Thus, it can be categorized as a lexical presupposition.

Excerpt 3

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Her hat was at 47 degrees. Royal protocol demands all hats to be worn at 49.3 degrees. Once again, she has brought disgrace on our beloved royal family. (@FonxxXXV)
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Presupposition: She once brought disgrace on royal family before.

The word *"once again"* in Excerpt 3 presupposes that the same thing has been done or happened before. In this case, other meanings are also understood apart from what has been expressed by the writer of the comment.

3. Factive Presupposition

Excerpt 4

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She was trying to out curtsy Princess Ann. What a joke she is. I am so embarrassed she is American. Our apologies but Harry chose her. (@galxx50)
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Presupposition:

  a. She is American.
  b. Harry chose her.

Triggers of presupposition such as *"I am so embarrassed"* and *"Our apologies"* in the utterance above can be categorized as factive presupposition. That is because the words express things already known to be true and are considered a fact.

Excerpt 5

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What the fake woman I don't even know why the royal let her stay there for the funeral (@Fidaxxxxx063)
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Presupposition: the royal let her stay there for the funeral.

The word *"I don't even know"* in the utterance shows the author's ignorance of the reason for the fact that the royal let her (Meghan) stay there for the funeral. Therefore, the trigger presupposition "know" confirms that the utterance is a factive presupposition.

4. Structural Presupposition

Excerpt 6

`Who can compete with a Narc and Gold digger?` (@Rachxxxxx944)

Presupposition: No one can compete with a Narc and Gold digger.

Excerpt 6 shows that the writer seems to intend to give a satire to Meghan Markle, who is often dubbed a narcissistic and gold digger, because basically the utterance is a comment in response to a tweet about how the Royal Family cannot compete Meghan Markle. Thus, the use of trigger WH-question "who" in utterance presupposes that something can be understood by the audience through the structure of the interrogative sentence.

Excerpt 7

`All that's missing is her broomstick. Who honestly though wears that mush heavy eye makeup to a funeral?` (@Fixxxoke)

Presupposition: Someone wears that mush heavy eye makeup to a funeral.

As in Excerpt 6, the interrogative sentence in Excerpt 7 is aimed at Meghan Markle as a form of satire. Despite the writer's assumptions about Meghan Markle, the audience knows something from the comments.

5. Non-factive Presupposition

Excerpt 8

`Cmon this is a funeral. Stop acting like it was met gala.` (@DavixxxRap)

Presupposition: It wasn't met gala

The word *"acting like"* presupposes that something is not true and is not a fact. The writer of the comment assumed about how Meghan Markle's outfit and attitude looked more like she was attending a fashion met gala event than a funeral. That is why the writer told Meghan to stop acting like it was met gala. Thus, that utterance can be categorized as non-factive presupposition.

Excerpt 9

`To show she's a "good" wife apparently, as if harry wasn't there every time she say bs about his grandma and his whole family. Sis you won he chose your lying ass over them, go back to America and let the UK in peace` (@smxxwtt)

Presupposition: Harry was there every time she says nonsense about his grandma and his whole family.

The trigger word *"as if"* in Excerpt 9 presupposes that something that is expressed is not a fact. The trigger presupposition makes it clear that the utterance belongs to a non-factive presupposition.

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6. Counterfactual Presupposition

Excerpt 10

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Her color has nothing to do with the situation. She married Harry because he has
money and status. That's until she controlled his life. She told him that, if he
didn't, publicly, that they were dating she would leave him. That is a control
freak. He needs to get a divorce.
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(@Tedxxxxell)

In the sentence *"She told him that, if he didn't, publicly, that they were dating shoe would leave him",* there is an IF-Clause which indicates that it is a counterfactual presupposition. The utterance presupposes that "he did publicly that they were dating". It shows that what is said is not only untrue but also contradictory.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the types of presupposition in Twitter hate comments towards Meghan Markle at Queen Elizabeth II's funeral. The results of this study show that all types of presupposition namely existential, lexical, factive, structural, non-factive, and counterfactual presupposition are found in hate comments towards Meghan. It was also found that existential presupposition was the most common type found in the data. It is because most of the hate comments towards Meghan Markle used a lot of definite/indefinite noun phrases to represent the assumptions of the writer of the comments. Furthermore, this research suggests that presupposition creates understanding toward the purpose of the comment writers.

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