



DEPICTING PRAGMATIC PRESUPPOSITIONS IN YOUTUBE ADVERTISEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Presupposition is one of influential elements of advertising language due to its persuasive function to grab viewers' attentions to buy a product. This study investigated the types of presupposition triggers in ten Indonesian skippable Youtube advertisements. The data from the advertisements particularly were analyzed in terms of presupposition triggers employed and mapped in percentage. Qualitative and descriptive quantitative approaches were employed in analyzing the data. The result showed that existential presupposition was the most frequent presupposition appeared in the Youtube advertisements analyzed in this study. The logical reason underlying the frequent use of existential presupposition is to inform the viewers about the existence of the product and attract the viewers in a simple way. It can be concluded that advertisers can utilize presuppositions to create a more attractive advertisements to gain the viewers' interests and accordingly purchase the advertised product.

Keywords: Presupposition, Presupposition triggers, Youtube advertisements

INTRODUCTION

Advertising in modern life plays an essential role and is certainly inseparable in our daily life (Yingfang, 2007). Recently, advertising is not only found in mass media such as newspaper, magazines, and television, but also on social media. With greater number of uses, social media has been increasingly used by the advertiser as a marketing tool in the recent years (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen, 2020), Youtube is no exception. Youtube is one of social media platforms that have been widely used by advertisers. It is the third most visited website worldwide, with over one billion monthly visitors (Bradshaw & Garrahan, 2008). As a result, it is a promising platform to advertise their products.

However, in today's expensive advertising industry, making an effective content and messages in the advertisement is critical (DeMooij & Hofstede, 2010). In this sense, advertisers must be able to create "a unique" and "straightforward" (Hahn, 2019, p. 1) advertisement language so that the consumers are attracted and accordingly purchase the advertised product. It can be inferred here that advertising is functioned mainly to deliver the message about



the product as fast as possible, to then increase the selling (Granat, 2003).

In this context, one aspect that gives the greatest influence to the consumer's interest to purchase the advertised products seems to be the language used in the advertisement. Language can be considered as an important aspect in advertising besides the visualization of the product. On the one hand, for those who are involved in trade and marketing world, language of advertising is able to help them as a means in achieving trading goals. On the other hand, it can also be analyzed pragmatically as persuasive discourse as its purpose: to persuade the viewers to buy the product.

Today, in order to get the consumers' interests to buy their products, the advertisers sometimes use manipulative language instead of persuasive language (Danciu, 2014). Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that advertisement today is more or less used not only as a persuasive tool in marketing products but also as a tool of manipulation which can influence the consumers' way of thinking and sometimes mislead them. As an example, advertisements of whitening products have spread the idea of being beautiful for a woman is having white skin. This idea has been regarded true by many people. This issue has become a linguistic phenomenon which can be analyzed pragmatically. One of pragmatic aspects which is beneficial for language of advertisements is presupposition. Presupposition is useful in increasing the informative and persuasive function of advertising language (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996; Goddard, 2001; Ge, 2011).

Many researches have been conducted to analyze presupposition in terms of types, functions, and its triggers in many types of discourse for example Ananda, Wihadi & Suryana (2016), Hasta & Marlina (2018), Liang & Liu (2016), Puksi (2018), Wang & Chen (2018), and Rachmawati & Ariyanti (2016). However, to date, the use of presupposition in Youtube advertisements has been received little attention. Therefore, this present study is aimed to fill the gap by analyzing the use of presupposition in Youtube advertisements.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Presupposition in pragmatics is included in inference (Levinson, 1983; Peccei, 2000; Huang, 2007). It can be seen from semantic as well as pragmatic point of view. Semantic presuppositions are "the accommodated beliefs necessary for an utterance to make sense", while pragmatic presuppositions are "the accommodations needed for an utterance to be appropriate" (Grundy, 2008, p. 48). Basically, presupposition can be defined as "what a speaker (or writer) assumes is true or known by a listener (or reader)" (Yule, 2010, p. 133). In this sense, presupposition always comes before making an utterance.

Thus, if someone says: "the king of England has three sons", he does not say that there is a king of England, but he *presupposes* that there is. Consider these examples (the >> is used to stand for 'presupposes that'):

[2a] The woman has a car

[2b] The woman's car is expensive

[2c] If the woman has a car, the woman's car is expensive



The [2a] >> there is a woman, [2b] >> that there is a woman and that the woman has a car. Meanwhile [2c] contains both [2a] and [2b]. The word ‘presuppose’, therefore, can be define as ‘to suppose beforehand; imply’ and ‘presupposition’ can be defined as ‘assumption’. Presupposition does not belong to the utterance but the speaker (Yule, 1996, p. 25).

There are two requirements of presupposition, ‘appropriateness’ and ‘mutual knowledge’ (common ground) which can be indicated in this statement: “an utterance A pragmatically presupposes a proposition B if A is appropriate only if B is mutually known by the participants” (Levinson, 1983, p. 205). Moreover, to test the presupposition underlying sentences, we can negate a sentence with a presupposition and check whether the presupposition remains true (Beaver, 1994; see also Huang, 2007; Yule, 2011). A presupposition should ‘survive’ negation or what is called *constancy under negation* (Yule, 1996; Grundy, 2008; Huang, 2008; see also Geurts, 1999). As examples: Alex is a bachelor and Alex is not a bachelor both mean that Alex is a male.

Additionally, presupposition is usually associated with the use of particular lexical item and grammatical aspect which are called *presupposition triggers* (Levinson, 1983; Huang, 2007). With this respect, several experts have listed various types of presupposition triggers. Karttunen (1971) proposes thirty-one types of those. Moreover, Levinson (1983), on the basis of Karttunen’s analysis, divides the presupposition trigger into thirteen types, including definite description, factive verbs, imperative verbs, change of state verbs, iterative, verbs of judging, temporal clauses, cleft sentence, implicit clefts with stressed constituents, comparison and contrasts, non-restrictive relative clauses, counterfactual conditionals, and questions. Meanwhile, Yule classifies the triggers into six types, namely existential presupposition, factive presupposition, lexical presupposition, structural presupposition, non-factive presupposition, and counterfactual presupposition (Yule, 1996; see also Grundy, 2008 and Huang, 2007). Khaleel (2010) reclassifies the Karttunen’s (1971) and Yule’s (1996) classifications into three major types namely existential (definite description), lexical (implicative verbs, factive verbs, change of state verbs, verbs of judging, counterfactual verbs, conventional items and iteratives); structural triggers (cleft constructions, Wh-questions, adverbial and comparative constructions, counterfactual conditionals, and non-restrictive clauses). This study will also adapt Khaleel’s classification of presupposition triggers with a little adjustment. The Wh-question category will be changed into questions in general (Yes/no questions, rhetorical questions, Wh-questions).



In order to make it clearer, the classification will be presented in the table below.

Table 1. Types of presupposition triggers

<i>Presupposition Triggers</i>	<i>Classifications</i>
<i>Existential</i>	Definite descriptions
<i>Lexical</i>	Implicative verbs
	Factive verbs
	Change of state verbs
	Verbs of judging
	Counterfactual verbs
	Conventional items
	Iteratives
<i>Structural</i>	Cleft constructions
	Questions
	Adverbial clauses
	Comparative constructions
	Counterfactual conditionals
	Non-restrictive clauses

Presupposition and advertising language

At the earlier stage, advertisements were functioned as a tool for achieving communication goals and to increase the image of a product (Granat, 2003). However, for a marketer, it is recently regarded as a tool to deliver the message of advertisement as fast as possible in order to achieve higher level of product selling by attracting the viewers' interest (Granat, 2003). It is in line with Halton & Rumbo (2007) stating that the purpose of advertising is "to make a profit for the advertiser" (p. 299).

In creating an advertisement, the advertisers have to consider the number of words will be stated in the advertisements to reduce the cost. With this respect, "good advertisements should be concise and economical" (Yingfang, 2007, p. 56). In this case, the diction of the advertising will influence the cost spent since it affects the time or space (especially for printed advertising).

With regard to this issue, advertising language moves from the area of marketing communications to broader linguistic and cultural communities (Arnould, 2007). This is in line with Danesi (2015) who outlines presupposition as one of specific strategies in advertising discourse. In this sense, presupposition is regarded as one of strategies adopted by the advertisers to persuade the viewers to buy certain products in an economical way. Presupposition obviously offers some functions in advertising language. Ge (2011) proposes eight functions of presupposition in advertising. The first is conciseness function in which presupposition can help to convey the message of the advertisements effectively in a short and straightforward way but substantial way. The second, presupposition has interestingness function which means that the use of presupposition in an advertisement can attract the audience and arouse their



motivation to purchase the advertised product. Ge (2011) states that in this function, the presupposed information is combined with asserted information can promote audience's involvement and humor in advertising language. The next function of presupposition is enlargement function. It means that presupposition can extend the amount of information of the advertised product by making the information more compact. For example by using interrogative form.

The fourth is emphasis function. In this context, presupposition can help to emphasize certain important information of the advertised product in order to create optimum effect for the audience. In addition, presupposition has euphemism function in which it takes into account the consumers' face so that their attention is promoted. It can be done by making the language more indirect and roundabout. The next function is concealment function where the presupposition can avoid all the negative assumption from the audience by concealing some specific information of the product.

In addition, presupposition has persuasion function which can make the advertisement more persuasive usually by using interrogative form. The last is self-protection function which means that it involves the use of hyperbole and comparison in order to make the advertisement appears "to be more objective than just appear to downgrade other companies' product" (Ge, 2011, p.28).

Nowadays, the Internet provides advertisers with opportunities to create cheaper advertisements that can reach more consumers, one of which is through making video advertisements on Youtube. It allows the advertisers to provide the advertisements in various modes such as graphics, audio and visual modes. Undoubtedly, "the new technologies are changing the ways in which advertising is delivered, but they have not changed its basic persuasive strategies" (Danesi, 2015, p. 5).

With regards to the background of the study which is supported by the literature review above, the study, hence, aims to find out the types of presupposition triggers used in Indonesia skippable Youtube advertisements. It hopefully provides a clear picture of how presupposition can be used to increase the consumers' interest to purchase advertised product.

METHOD

As indicated before, this study tries to investigate types of presupposition triggers in Indonesia skippable YouTube advertisements. In accordance with this study's interests, it employs mostly a qualitative design yet some descriptive quantification is also used. Qualitative study is used to describe the characteristics of a particular phenomenon (Alwasilah, 2000, p.151) which is advertising language. Moreover, the quantitative analysis in form of descriptive quantification is employed particularly to list the frequency of mapped presupposition from each title of the YouTube advertisements. By using this method, this study was expected to be able to find out, define and analyze the topic of the study.

The data of this present study were selected through purposive sampling technique. As asserted by Cohen, Manion & Morison (2007), purposive sampling technique is particularly employed in a small-scale study without an attempt to



generalize. Hence, ten Indonesia skippable YouTube advertisements which had the most viewers in 2019 based on the information released by Google Indonesia were chosen as the object of this study. Furthermore, this sampling was employed especially based on the consideration that the advertisements gained the most viewers and they are categorized into skippable ads on Youtube which the viewers can choose to or not to skip after 5 seconds. It can be considered that the viewers who do watch the ads are perhaps genuinely attracted by the ads.

To analyze the data, the researcher followed several steps. After the ten YouTube advertisements were collected, the analysis of the advertisements was started by identifying the trigger of the presupposition. This identification process was conducted word per word to have clear details. The data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative analysis was employed to classify the presuppositions based on their triggers based on types of presupposition triggers proposed Khaleel (2010) with a little adaptation. Furthermore, the descriptive quantitative analysis was conducted to find out the percentage of occurrence of the presupposition triggers found in the advertisements to reveal the trend of presuppositions found in the advertisements. Finally, the researcher interpreted the results of the analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

After collecting and analyzing the data of presupposition triggers found in Indonesia Youtube advertisements, the result of the appearance of the presupposition triggers based on its types is presented in the following table.

Table 2. Presupposition triggers in Indonesian Youtube advertisements

<i>No.</i>	<i>Presupposition triggers</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Existential	46	67.7%
2	Lexical	3	4.4%
3	Structural	16	27.9%
	Total	65	100%

From the table above, we can see that the highest occurrence in Youtube advertisements is the existential triggers, followed by structural and lexical presuppositions. A more detailed analysis of the three types of presupposition triggers will be presented below.

Existential presuppositions

According to table 2, there are totally 65 data of presupposition triggers in the ten most watched Youtube advertisements in 2019. It shows that the dominant used category of presupposition triggers is existential. It appeared 46 times out of 65 total of the presuppositions or about 67.7%. This presupposition trigger uses definite description to show the existence of the products in the advertisements. As suggested by Yule (1996), existential presupposition is triggered by proper names and demonstrative pronoun (there is, there are). These existential



presupposition appears to remind us of the product by mentioning the existed element of the ad, i.e. the name of the product and the entity attached to it, i.e. greatness. Here is one example from the data. The symbol “>>” is used to stand for “presupposes”.

Datum 9 “*Shopee Men Sale, pasti cashback pasti gratis hadiah*” (Shopee Men Sale, there must be cashback promo, there must be free prizes) – Shopee Men Sale advertisement
 >> There is Shopee Men Sale
 >> There are cashback promo and free prize in Shopee Men Sale

The datum above presupposes that there is a product (in this case, a marketplace) called Shopee Men Sale and there are cashback promo and free prizes in the Shopee Men Sale. It indicates that the ad creator intends to attract the viewers by informing that there is men product sale in Shopee and there are cashback promo and prizes in the sale program.

Datum 13 “*Toyota New Avanza - Part of Indonesia's Greatness*” – Toyota New Avanza advertisement
 >> There is Toyota New Avanza
 >> Toyota New Avanza is a part of Indonesia’s Greatness

From the datum above, it can be presupposed that there is a product called Toyota New Avanza and it is a part of Indonesia’s greatness. It is categorized into definite description because it definitely shows the existence of something. In this context, the ad creator might intends to inform the viewers about the existence of the product.

Lexical presuppositions

As shown in the table 2, the lexical triggers appeared 4 times or only about 4.4 % from the total 65 appearances. More specifically, the table below shows the classifications of the lexical items.

Table 3. Percentage of lexical presuppositions found

<i>No.</i>	<i>Lexical</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Implicative verbs	0	0
2	Factive verbs	0	0
3	Change of state verbs	0	0
4	Verbs of judging	0	0
5	Counter factual verbs	0	0
6	Conventional items	1	25%
7	Iteratives	3	75%
Total		4	100%

The table above shows that the occurrence of lexical presupposition is 4



times with only 2 types appear including conventional items and iteratives. The highest occurrence was the iterative category with the percentage 75%.

Iterative items

Iteratives point out that an action has taken place repeatedly. It is in line with Khaleel (2010) and Liang & Liu (2016) who state that iterative items shows the occurrence of an event repeatedly. Iterative items can be seen from the following words: another, again, anymore, too, to return, to come back, restore, repeat, etc.

Datum 52 “*Rakyat gak perlu panik berat di ongkir lagi, ..., Buka aja Bukalapak*” (People need not to worry about the postal charges **anymore**, ..., just open Bukalapak)- Bukalapak advertisement

>> People always worry about the postal charge when purchasing products in marketplace

This datum presupposes that the people have always been worried about the postal charges when purchasing products in a marketplace. The word ‘anymore’ makes it clearer. The ad creator possibly wants to emphasize that the postal charge have always been the problem for the people in purchasing products online. And now, they do not need to worry anymore because *Bukalapak* (the marketplace) gives them free postal charge guarantee.

Conventional items

Presuppositions of a statement can also be seen as a part of the conventional meaning which is linked to lexical items not limited to verbs only but also other lexical items.

Datum 24 “*Kami tak gentar menembus hujan supaya kamu sampai tujuan*” (We are **not afraid** of going through the rain so that you can arrive at your destination) – Gojek advertisement

>> They are brave to go through the rain for the customer’s arrival in their destinations

From the datum above, ‘we are not afraid’ involves the presupposition that ‘they are brave’. This lexical item is employed to be tied to the Gojek that the Gojek’s drivers are associated with bravery in doing anything (in this context ‘going through the rain) for the customer’s arrival in their destination. This lexical item might be purposively used by the advertiser to attract the viewers’ attention so that they will decide to use or buy the advertised product or service.

Structural presuppositions

Besides the existential and lexical presupposition triggers, there are also structural presupposition triggers found in this study. Structural presupposition deals with an assumption that the use of certain sentence structures is conventionally regarded presupposing that part of the structure that is assumed to be true (Yule, 1996).



Furthermore, based on table 2 above, the structural triggers appeared 16 times or about 27.9% from the total occurrence. The following table presents the classification of the structural triggers.

Table 4. Percentage of structural presuppositions found

No.	Structural	Frequency	Percentage
1	Cleft constructions	4	25%
2	Questions	0	0%
3	Adverbial clauses	9	56.25 %
4	Comparative constructions	3	18.75%
5	Counter factual conditionals	0	0
6	Non-restrictive clauses	4	25%
Total		16	100%

The table above shows that, among the six classifications of structural triggers, four types are found in the Youtube advertisements. They are cleft constructions, adverbial clauses, comparative constructions, and non-restrictive clauses. As we can see, the most frequent occurrence of structural presupposition is in adverbial clauses which is 9 times or about 56.25% of the total 16 occurrences. The highest occurrence of questions type of trigger indicates that the ads creator wants to introduce further presupposition (see Levinson, 1983).

Cleft constructions

Cleft construction is usually employed to show a specific element into focus (Khaleel, 2010).

Datum 15 “*Kami yang selalu berjalan mendekati pada kebaruan*” (It was us who always walk towards innovations) – Toyota New Avanza advertisement

>> They always walk towards innovations

The datum indicates that ‘us’ (in this context, Toyota New Avanza) is the specifically focused element. Consequently, the sentence presupposes that they always walk towards innovation. Here the advertiser seems to emphasize on the product itself which always be innovated by the maker.

Adverbial clauses

Adverbial clauses are usually placed in initial or final position of the main clause (Khaleel, 2010). As we can see in table 2, structural presupposition triggers in form of adverbial clauses occur 9 times or about 56.25% from the total triggers.

Datum 38 “*Abis gajian, kartu ketinggalan, bisa setor tunai tanpa kartu*” (It’s your payday but you left your card, you can deposit cash without a card” – Solusi BCA advertisement

>> You receive your salary and you do not bring your card with you



This datum is categorized as the structural presupposition in form of adverbial clause. In this context, the part “*abis gajian, kartu ketinggalan*” is the adverbial clause. Through this clause, the advertiser might intend to attract the viewers by stating that Solusi BCA eases them when something like that happens.

Comparative constructions

Comparative construction can also be categorized into a trigger of presupposition. In this study, comparative construction occurred 3 times or about 18.75% (see table 2).

Datum 45 “*Oppo A9 2020, more expert to a new level*”- Oppo A9 2020 advertisement

>> Oppo A9 2020 is more expert than the previous type of phone

From this datum, it can be presupposed that the Oppo A9 2020 is more expert than their former types of phone. This type of presupposition is useful to draw the viewer’s interests to buy this mobile phone.

Non-restrictive clause

Non-restrictive clauses are the last type of structural triggers which provides additional information but does not identify the head noun. This kind of clause commonly uses who, which, when, where, etc. (Liang & Liu, 2016). From the data analysis, this triggers occurred 4 times or about 25% of the structural triggers.

Datum 19 “*Kami yang berbeda cerita, cara dan selera... kami suara Indonesia*” (We, who have different stories, ways, and tastes, We are the voice of Indonesia) – Toyota New Avanza Ad

>> They have different stories, ways, and tastes

The word ‘they’ here much likely refers to the users and manufacturers of Toyota New Avanza. In this context, the advertiser aims at getting the viewers’ attention by saying that even though they have different stories, ways, and interests, they are still the voice of Indonesia.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In its attempt to depict the presupposition triggers employed in Indonesia skippable Youtube advertisements, this research has identified and analyzed the presupposition triggers found in the advertisements thoroughly. After analyzing ten Indonesia most watched skippable Youtube advertisements, there were only seven types from fourteen types of triggers. They are existential (definite description), lexical (conventional items and iteratives), and structural (questions, adverbial clause, comparative constructions, and non-restrictive clauses). It was identified that existential presupposition triggers in form of definite description became the most frequently used triggers employed in the advertisements. Existential presupposition which appeared mostly in the ten Indonesia skippable



Youtube advertisements can be a tool to inform the viewers that their product exists to further arises their interest to purchase the product. From this point of view, it can be inferred that presupposition is a powerful tool for advertisers in influencing the viewers. In the context of video advertisements, certainly, various modes such as audio and visual modes will also influence the viewers. However, the persuasive element given by presupposition use cannot be neglected. It can be concluded that presupposition cannot only help the advertisers to influence the viewers but also other professions to influence people. Finally, it is suggested for further researcher, to study presupposition in different kinds of texts and in terms of its functions in composing a discourse.

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