



# An Analysis of Presupposition Triggers in "Turning Red"

DianFitriani<sup>1</sup>, Mhd. Johan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>pb191210010@upbatam.ac.id

<sup>2</sup>mhd.johan@puterabatam.ac.id

<sup>1</sup>English Literature Department, Universitas Putera Batam, Batam, Kepulauan Riau

<sup>2</sup>English Literature Department, Universitas Putera Batam, Batam, Kepulauan Riau

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## Abstract

This research analyzes the triggers of the presupposition that can be discovered in the movie "Turning Red." The purpose of this study is to identify the use of triggers of the presupposition that are employed in the movie "Turning Red." In the movie "Turning Red," there are several triggers of presupposition that can be found. In this study, the researcher adopted Levinson's theory about the triggers of presupposition. A qualitative descriptive approach was adopted in this study. The data was gathered primarily through direct observation. Data were collected using a non-participatory approach, which meant the researcher was not present during data analysis. After doing the investigation, the researchers identified twenty items that function as the triggers of presupposition in the film Turning Red. The most prevalent triggers of presupposition in the film "Turning Red" are change-of-state verbs, iterative, and counterfactual conditionals. Each of them has three utterances. The second most common triggers of presupposition are implicative verbs, temporal clause, and cleft. Each of them has 2 utterances. There was only 1 utterance each sentence for definite description, factual verbs, comparisons and contrasts, nonrestrictive clauses, and wh-questions. There have been no discoveries about of judging verbs and implicit clefts with stressed constituents.

**Keywords:** *pragmatics, presupposition, triggers of presupposition*

## Introduction

Language is the most important thing for humans. It has the biggest role for humans to communicate with each other. With language, humans can share and socialize information and thoughts. This information and thoughts can have many different meanings. These different meanings can be said without literal meaning. It can be identified with the context.

Meaning can be identified through context. The study of context is called pragmatics. Pragmatics is one of the linguistics branches that study meaning based on context. Yule (2017) defined that pragmatics studies "invisible" meaning, or how we know what's intended when it's not expressed or written. Speakers (or writers) must rely on shared assumptions and expectations when communicating. Examining assumptions and expectations reveals how we perceive more than utterances' linguistic content. Pragmatically, more is transmitted than said.

One of the pragmatics branches is a presupposition. There are some definitions

of presupposition according to some experts. Yule (2017) defined presupposition as a presumption made by a speaker or writer regarding something that the audience already has knowledge of or is aware of already. Huang (as cited in Thooyibah 2017) emphasized that a presupposition can be thought of as an inference or a proposition whose veracity is assumed to be correct when it is used in a phrase. Instead of having a direct relationship with sentences, the presupposition is more closely related to speakers. In addition, it is essential to understand the sentence as a whole in order to acquire pragmatic meaning in the paragraph. Levinson (1983) explained pragmatics as the study of those grammaticalized or embedded in the structure of language interactions between language and situation.

A statement is considered suitable in its context only if both the speaker and the listener are aware of, or assume, the existence of a given presupposition. Words, phrases, and clauses immediately after the presupposed sentences serve as triggers for their actualization. Presupposition triggers are the words, phrases, and sentences that are commonly prompted by the presence of presupposition in conversation. A small group of linguists have devised a system for categorizing presupposition triggers. Karttunen's classification of the presupposition triggers into thirty-one different types of presupposition was published in Levinson (1983). Levinson (1983) identified thirteen presupposition triggers. Those triggers are definite descriptions, factive verbs, implicative verbs, change-of-state verbs, iterative, verb of judging, temporal clauses, cleft construction, implicit cleft with stressed constituents, comparisons and contrasts, non-restrictive relative clauses, counterfactual conditionals, and questions. Additionally, the use of presupposition is common in movies.

Movie has become one of the favorite things for some people. People watch movie in order to spend their free time. The movie contains conversations that may produce the use of presupposition. The use of presupposition that is stimulated by some specific words, phrases, and clauses can be called a trigger of presupposition. The trigger of presupposition can be identified from a movie. For example, there is a conversation from a movie title *To Kill a Mockingbird* that is released on December 25 1962.

Dill : Why do you call your daddy Atticus?  
Scout : 'Cause Jem does.  
Dill : Why does he?  
Scout : I don't know. He just **started** to when he first began talking.

The verb "started" triggers presupposition. The trigger is considered as a change state of verbs. When he starts talking, Jem calls his father by name. Scout spoke about her brother Jem, who calls his father solely by his name. Lexical presupposition describes this statement. The speaker says a word implies one thing, but listeners would think it means another.

Turning Red also makes use of the presuppositional trigger. In the film "Turning Red," starring Chiang, a Chinese-Canadian teen named Meilin "Mei" Lee (13 at the time of filming) has the ability to transform into a giant red panda whenever she experiences intense feelings. On March 11th, 2022, the film finally hit theaters.

There is one statement spoken by Ming that demonstrates the use of a presupposition trigger in this film.

Ming : As you **know**, our ancestor, Sun Yee, had a mystical connection with red pandas.

The sentence above contains the trigger of presupposition “know”. It is considered as factive verb. It is because that verb “know” gives the information about a mystical bond between their ancestors, Sun Yee with red pandas.

Additionally, there are some studies that have the similarities with this study. First research was conducted by Roza and Ayumi (2020). The goal of this research was to identify the types of presuppositions made by audiences based just on the taglines of horror film posters. The results showed that definite descriptions are the most common presupposition trigger out of the total of 42 found in the taglines of horror movie posters. The second research is conducted by Murillo and Yeh (2021). This research analyzed the presuppositions made in Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's fifth State of the Nation Address (SONA). This study suggests that studying presupposition enhances comprehension, particularly in political speeches when ineffectual rhetoric may be a symptom of a larger societal issue.

Both historical research and the research being done now share something in common. To be more specific, they both utilize Levinson's idea about that is adopted from Karttunen as a reference for conducting data analysis. The researcher's sort all of the information they have gathered into many categories in order to identify the factors that led to the hypothesis. On the other hand, the data sources used by prior researchers and this study are distinct. The information presented in the film "Turning Red" will be analyzed as part of this research project.

## **Review on Related Literature**

### **Pragmatics**

Yule (2017) explained pragmatics is the study of what people actually mean when they speak, sometimes known as "speaker meaning." Understanding what people mean by what they say depends not only on being able to identify the meaning of individual words within a sentence, but also on being able to identify what others mean by what they say in the context in which it is said. Pragmatics is sometimes described as the study of "invisible" meaning, or the method in which we understand what is intended even when it is not explicitly stated. To accomplish this, it is necessary for those attempting to communicate to be able to rely on a large number of commonly held assumptions and expectations. Examining these presuppositions and expectations helps shed light on how we process information beyond the literal words spoken. From a pragmatics point of view, the communication is always more than what is spoken.

### **Presupposition**

Before making a statement, a person will often make certain assumptions

about the world around them. These are called presuppositions. Presupposition is part of the reader's (interlocutor's) pragmatic assumptions about common knowledge in a dialogue. A presupposition is an assumption that forms the basis for a statement. It does not matter what's going on or who's saying it, as long as we have some idea of the setting.

Yule (1996) defined presupposition is an assumption made by the speaker before to uttering a statement. It shows that the speaker is making an assumption before uttering a comment and that the listener will understand what the speaker means. The assumption is in the speaker, not the words. The study of presupposition is engaging because it requires that we be aware of the statement's assumption. These assumptions may be accurate depending on the speaker's words. In addition to being present in utterances, we can also find presumption in advertisements, slogans, and taglines.

According to Levinson (1983), a presupposition is "the common ground inherent in an utterance that is assumed to be normal by all participants in a speech event," including the speaker/writer and the reader/hearer. The study of presupposition has led to the discovery of more words and constructions that give birth to presupposition, known as presupposition triggers, despite the widespread belief that presupposition consists of a wide variety of unrelated occurrences. The implementation of these presuppositions is stimulated by specific words, phrases, and clauses that come after the specific presupposed sentences. The use of presupposition can be called a trigger of presupposition.

Levinson (1983) stated there thirteen triggers of presupposition:

### **1) Definite description**

There must be something concrete to describe. This is distinguished by the presence of noun phrases, possessiveness, and the verb stating the presence of certain entities.

Example :

John saw/didn't see **the man** with two heads.

(Levinson, 1983), p. 181)

"The man" describes a two-headed man.

### **2) Factive Verbs**

Verbs that take a sentence as a complement are called "factive verbs." The factive verb takes the truth of the proportional complement as given. Factive verbs include sorry, aware, strange, know, regret, proud, happy, indifferent, happy that, realize, and sad.

Example:

Frankenstein was/wasn't **aware** that Dracula was there.

(Levinson, 1983), p. 181)

The word "aware" tells that Dracula was there.

### 3) **Implicative Verbs**

An implicative presupposition is usually set off by words like "avoid," "forget," "dream," "figure out," "pretend," and so on. If a statement follows one of these words, its presupposition is automatically disregarded as untrue.

Example:

John **managed**/didn't **manage** to open the door.

(Levinson, 1983), p. 181)

John tried to open the door. This is shown by the word "managed."

### 4) **Change State of Verb**

The use of "change of state" verbs denotes a transition from one state or condition to another. Verbs like "stop," "begin," "continue," "go," "take," "leave," "start," and "take" are assumed in this context.

Example:

John **stopped**/didn't **stop** beating his wife.

(Levinson, 1983), p. 181)

John was apparently assaulting his wife at the time the verb "stopped."

### 5) **Iterative**

Iterative is another way of saying "repeated." Words like "repeat," "restore," "reestablish," "again," "too," "come back," "step back," and so on all imply the same thing. These cues reveal background data about the speaker or the world at large, such as when something existed or what they did before.

Example:

The flying saucer came/didn't come **again**.

(Levinson, 1983), p. 182)

The presence of the term "again" demonstrates that the flying saucer existed in the past.

### 6) **Verbs of Judging**

The verb of judging is the process of developing an opinion from an opinion that has already been formed as a result of an activity that has been carried out. This presupposition does not include speakers as a subject in any way, shape, or form.

Example:

Agatha **accused**/ **accuse** Ian of plagiarism.

(Levinson, 1983), p. 182)

The usage of the word "accused" demonstrates that Agatha considers plagiarism to be unethical.

### 7) Temporal Clauses

This temporal trigger makes an assumption and then links two statements. The use of a time conjunction, such as before, after, during, so far, whenever, or midway, prompts this presupposition.

Example:

**Before** Strawson was even born, Frege noticed/didn't notice presupposition.

(Levinson, 1983), p. 182)

The information that Strawson was born is given through the grammatical construction of before, which is a temporal clause.

### 8) Cleft

As a general category of presuppositional syntactic structures, clefts can take many distinct shapes. The it-cleft (also known as simply cleft), the wh-cleft (also known as pseudo-cleft), and the reverse wh-cleft (also known as pseudo-cleft backwards) are the most prevalent types of clefts.

Example:

**It** was/wasn't Henry that kissed Rosie.

(Levinson, 1983), p. 183)

The fact that "it" is cleft indicates that Rosie was kissed by another person.

### 9) Implicit Clefts With Stressed Constituents

This kind seems to have been generated from two different split sentences, and it is only active when the elements are under a significant amount of stress.

Example:

Linguistics was/wasn't invented by **Chomsky!**

(Levinson, 1983), p. 183)

Chomsky is the indication that someone was responsible for the creation of linguistics.

### 10) Comparisons and Contrasts

Comparison and contrast can be defined in a number of different ways, including by using stress (or other prosodic methods), particles like "too," or comparable formulations.

Example:

Carol is/isn't a **better linguist** than Barbara. (Levinson, 1983), p. 183)

It is clear that Barbara is a linguist because of the emphasis placed on the phrase "better linguist."

### 11) Non-restrictive Clause

A nonrestrictive clause adds further information to the sentence. Typically, a proper or common noun is used to refer to the person, object, or event that is being discussed. Commas are used to indicate that the information that comes after them is not necessary.

Example:

The Proto-Harrapans, **who flourished 2800-2650 B.C.**, were/were not great temple builders.(Levinson, 1983), p. 184)

More data shows that the Proto-Harrapans reached their peak between 2800 and 2650 B.C.

### 12) Counterfactual Conditional

There is an implicit untruth in the counterfactual condition. This assumption proves the validity of a counterintuitive one. Use the if clause and other conditional words like "imagine" and "dream" frequently.

Example:

If the notice had only said '**mine-field**' in English as well as Welsh, we would/would never have lost poor Llewellyn.(Levinson, 1983), p. 184)

The word 'mine-field' was not included in the English warning.

### 13) WH-Questions

According to Levinson (1983), three types of inquiries are yes/no, open-ended, and worthless. Alternative inquiries, however, presuppose the disjunction of their solutions and are not empty. Finally, the WH question adds the presupposition by substituting WH with the appropriate existential quantifying variable, such as who by someone, where by someplace, how by somehow, etc.

Example:

**Who** is the professor of linguistics at MIT? (Levinson, 1983), p. 184)

Someone at MIT teaches linguistics.

## Method

The study's data was gathered from a watching of the film *Turning Red* and was categorized in accordance with Levinson's theory. Quantitative methods were used to determine how the presupposition's triggers are presented and discussed in the movie. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to research. The data came from the film "*Turning Red*" since the researcher claimed to be analyzing the triggers of presupposition. The researcher employed an observational method in the data collection process that is defined by Sudaryanto (2015). He emphasized the observational method as a technique for gathering information through careful observation. Since the researcher was not involved in the production of the film, she employed a non-participatory method to gather information for this study. The study's researcher did not appear in the film in any capacity and had no hand in its production. Data analysis was conducted using the principle of Sudaryanto (2015).

The researcher employed a number of methods for data analysis, including the ones listed below:

1. The data were collected and categorized based on the triggers of presupposition.
2. Levinson's theory is used for describing the triggers of presupposition.
3. The research question was explained by providing an explanation of the results in view of the underlying theory.
4. The result has been made.

## Results

After conducting the research, researchers discovered twenty facts that serve as the triggers of presupposition in the movie *Turning Red*.

Table 1.Result

Triggers	Frequency
Definite Description	1
Factive Verbs	1
Implicative Verbs	2
Change-state Of Verbs	3
Iterative	3
Verbs of Judging	-
Temporal Clauses	2
Cleft	2
Implicit Clefts With Stressed Constituents	-
Comparisons and Contrasts	1
Non-restrictive Clause	1
Counterfactual Conditional	3

WH-Questions	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

## Discussion

### Data 1

In the prologue of the movie, the main character, Mei-Mei talked about honoring her parents. She described the things that parents do to their children.

Mei-Mei :They're **the supreme beings** who gave you life who sweated and sacrificed so much to put a roof over your head, food on your plate, an epic amount of food.

The sentence above contains one of the triggers of presupposition which is a definite description. It is considered as definite description due to the phrase “the supreme beings” that refers to “they” which is her parents.

### Data 2

It is in the same prologue where Mei-Mei talked about honoring her parents. She described the things that parents do to their children.

Mei-Mei : They're the supreme beings **who gave you life who sweated and sacrificed so much** to put a roof over your head, food on your plate, an epic amount of food.

The sentence above contains the trigger of the presupposition which is non-restrictive clause. It is considered as non-restrictive clause because the sentence contains the dependent clause, which cannot stand alone.

### Data 3

It is in the same prologue where Mei-Mei talked about honoring her parents. She is giving a quotation about honoring parents.

Mei-Mei : “Honoring your parents sounds great, but **if you take it too far**, well, you might forget to honor yourself.” Luckily, I don't have that problem.

The utterance above shows the use of the trigger of the presupposition that is counterfactual conditional. It is considered as counterfactual conditional because it contains the “if clause” that gives false and contrast information that Mei-Mei would forget to honor herself if she honors her parents that much.

### Data 4

There is a conversation between the character that are Ming and Mei-Mei. The conversation is about Ming who angrily talked to Mei-Mei about the pictures of a boy

that Mei-Mei liked that are created by Mei-Mei. There is a sentence that contains the trigger of presupposition.

Ming : You are her pride and joy, so act like it!

Mei-Mei : This will never happen **again**.

From the sentence above, Mei-Mei's utterance contains the use of the trigger of the presupposition that is iterative. It is considered as iterative because the word "**again**" gives another piece of information that Mei-Mei drew pictures of a boy before.

#### **Data 5**

There is another utterance from Ming in a conversation between Ming and Mei-Mei where Ming angrily talked to Mei-Mei about the pictures of a boy that Mei-Mei liked that are created by Mei-Mei. There is a sentence that contains the trigger of presupposition.

Ming : You sicko! What were you thinking? **Why** would you draw those things?

The utterance above contains the trigger of presupposition that is WH-questions. It is considered as wh-questions trigger because the word "why" gives the information that Mei-Mei drew the pictures.

#### **Data 6**

There is a conversation where all of Mei-Mei's family gathered in order to do a ritual for Mei-Mei.

Ming : The red moon is about to **begin**. Mei-Mei, go get ready.

The sentence above shows there is a trigger of presupposition that is change-state of verb. It is considered as change-state of verb because the use of the verb "begin" that shows the information that the red moon does not start yet before the utterance happens.

#### **Data 7**

There is a conversation between Ming and Mei-Mei that happened in the car talking about the boy that Mei-Mei liked.

Ming : Thank goodness I was here. That degenerate won't **come** near you again.

The sentence above contains the trigger of the presupposition that is the change-state of verbs. It is considered as a change-state of verbs because the verb "come" functions as a word that gives another information that the boy appeared and approached Mei-Mei.

#### **Data 8**

There is an utterance that happened where Ming and Mei-Mei were praying together at the house of worship.

Ming : We humbly thank you for protecting and guiding us. Especially Mei-Mei.

Mei-Mei : May we **continue** to serve and honor you and this community.

Mei-Mei's utterance contains the trigger of the presupposition that is change-state of verbs. It is considered as a change-state of verbs because the verb "continue" functions as a word that gives another information that Ming and Mei-Mei have already served and honored the ancestor before the utterance even happened.

#### Data 9

There is a conversation happened between Mei-Mei and her friends. They were planning to go to karaoke.

Miriam : Mei, every day is cleaning day. Can't you just get one afternoon off?

Mei-Mei: But I like cleaning. Plus, I got this new feather duster and, oh, my gosh, you guys, **it** picks up so much dirt, it's bananas!

Mei-Mei's utterance above contains the trigger of presupposition that is cleft. It is considered as cleft because the utterance contains the word "it" that refers to the new feather duster.

#### Data 10

There is an utterance created by Ming where Ming and Mei-Mei talked about Mei-Mei's transformation into a red panda.

Ming : I thought, **if I watched you like a hawk**, I'd see the signs and be able to prepare.

The utterance contains the trigger of the presupposition that is counterfactual conditionals. It is considered as the counterfactual conditionals because there is "if clause" that shows the information is false and also contrast. It shows the information that it is not true that Ming sees the signs of Mei-Mei turning into a red panda.

#### Data 11

There is a conversation among Mei-Mei and her friends about going to the concert without her mom's permission.

Mei-Mei : Forget my mom. I'll be back **before** she even knows I'm gone.

The utterance above shows the use of the trigger of the presupposition that is temporal clause. It is considered as temporal clause because the word "before" gives the information that Mei-Mei will return to her house while her mom does not even aware that she leaves the house.

#### Data 12

There is an utterance from other character named Lily, who was talking about Mei-Mei's ability controlling the red panda.

Lily : Mei-Mei's **better than** any of us at controlling the panda.

The utterance above shows the trigger of the presupposition that is comparison and contrast. It is known from the phrase "better than" that gives the information that Mei-Mei is also a red panda just like her family.

### **Data 13**

There is a conversation among Mei-Mei and her parents, talking about Mei-Mei transformation into a red panda.

Ming : How is this possible? What happened to your panda?

Mei-Mei : It's easy. **When I start to get emotional**, all I do is imagine the people I love most in the whole world.

Mei-Mei's utterance contains the use of a trigger of the presupposition that is the temporal clause. It is considered as temporal clause because the bold clause gives the information that Mei-Mei needs to think about her parents in order to prevent get emotional.

### **Data 14**

There is a conversation between Mei-Mei and her friends about her transformation.

Miriam : Is it gone?

Mei-Mei : For now. But **if I get too excited**, it'll come right back... Ow!

Mei-Mei's utterance contains the trigger of the presupposition that is counterfactual conditionals. It is considered as counterfactual conditionals because the if clause gives the information the condition where Mei-Mei gets too excited, she will turn into a red panda.

### **Data 15**

There is a conversation between Mei-Mei and her friends about a boy named Devon.

Mei-Mei : He looks like a hobo.

Abby : A hot hobo.

Mei-Mei : May I remind you **what** real men look like?

The utterance that is created by Mei-Mei contains the use of the trigger of presupposition that is cleft. It is because that the word "what" indicates the information about the appearance of real men.

### **Data 16**

A conversation between Ming and Mei-Mei happened when Ming finds out that Mei-Mei is freaking out in the bathroom.

Ming : Mei-Mei, I **know** this is upsetting, but we are going to get through this together. I have ibuprofen, vitamin B, a hot water bottle, and pads.

Ming's utterance contains the use of the trigger of the presupposition which is factive verbs. It is because the word "know" indicates information that it is fact that getting period makes Mei-Mei upset.

### Data 17

There is an utterance from Ming asking about Mei-Mei's transformation.

Ming : How is this possible? What happened to your panda?

The utterance above shows the use of the trigger of the presupposition which is implicative verbs. It is because the phrase "happened to" indicates information about the Mei-Mei returning into human after being a red panda.

### Data 18

A conversation between Mei-Mei and her friends about going to karaoke is happened.

Mei-Mei : We'll karaoke **another time**, I promise!

Miriam : Okay, sure, Mei!

Mei-Mei's utterance contains the use of the trigger of the presupposition that is iterative. It is because the phrase "another time" gives the information that another karaoke will happen in the future.

### Data 19

There is an utterance of Mei-Mei that happened when she confronted her mother about her lies.

Mei-Mei : I'm not your little Mei-Mei **anymore!** I lied, Mom!

The utterance above indicates the trigger of the presupposition that is iterative. It is because the word "anymore" gives the information that Mei-Mei was her mom's little girl.

### Data 20

There is an utterance created by Mei-Mei when she was calming herself.

Mei-Mei: Okay. No biggie. You'll **figure this out**, Lee. Just be the calm, mature adult you totally are.

The utterance above contains the use of the trigger of presupposition that is implicative verbs. It is because that the verb "figure this out" gives the information that things are completely the opposite of what Mei-Mei expected, which is to get normal without getting turn into a red panda.

### Conclusion

In this investigation, twenty data including presupposition's triggers have been collected. Using Levinson's theory, the researchers assess each piece of data and classify it according to its function after collecting the data. According to Levinson (1983), these are definite descriptions, factive verbs, implicative verbs, change-of-state verbs, iterative, judging verbs, temporal clauses, cleft constructions, implicit clefts with stressed constituents, comparisons and contrasts, nonrestrictive relative clauses, counterfactual conditionals, and questions.

Presupposition is most easily triggered in "Turning Red" by verbs that indicate a change in state, iterative constructions, and counterfactual conditionals,

according to the study. A total of three new forms of language have been discovered by each of them. Next to cleft, temporal clauses and implicative verbs are the most common linguistic cues for assuming something before it is proven. They can each speak twice. With the exception of wh-questions, each phrase only had one utterance when using definite description, factual verbs, comparisons and contrasts, and nonrestrictive clauses. When it comes to assessing verbs and implicit clefts with stressed components, no new findings have been made.

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