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Presupposition Triggers in Online Editorial Discourse

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ABSTRACT

Presupposition triggers play a very crucial role when readers draw inferences from what they read. This paper examined the prevalence of presupposition triggers in 39 online political editorials taken from three Philippine dailies, and how such presupposition triggers realize the intended meanings of writers. The paper is grounded on Yule (2008)'s and Huang (2007)'s classification of presupposition triggers. Analysis of the texts revealed that Lexical triggers are the most frequently used presupposition trigger, with Existential presupposition as the most common subtype. As for Structural triggers, 'Temporal' clauses appeared to be the most dominant. The use of specific words that signal the existence of presupposition provides the readers with a means of understanding the implicit meaning being communicated by the writers. Because these presupposition triggers offer the text's intended meaning, readers can more easily understand the main idea(s) of the text without drawing rash conclusions.

INTRODUCTION

Language serves essentially for the expression of thought. Every single day, we consume information via different modes: print, electronic, and people trail, social media and many more. As consumers of information, we are bound to interpret the meaning of what we read, hear or listen to. However, problem arises when people start assigning meaning to different items of information they consume or when people make inferences that are divergent from what speakers and writers have intended. How people arrive at the right interpretation of the things they read, watch and listen to is an enterprise fraught with difficulty. In the process of interpretation, readers' and listeners' perspectives, biases, preconceived ideas, background knowledge, and prior experiences can interfere with the meaning projected by speakers and writers. This problem may appear superficial, but if overlooked, people can unwittingly generate false meanings, which when expressed in the open, can be very disastrous considering that humans live and die with information. Worse, they can become victims themselves of misinformation and disinformation which are pervasive in the country nowadays. This dilemma then begs the question; how can readers and listeners make the right inferences or decode the messages they receive exactly how writers and speakers expect their messages to be received? One pragmatic solution to this is the ability to spot presuppositions which are typically introduced by presupposition triggers. These items of linguistic expressions help in realizing the writer's or speaker's intended meaning and intentions no matter how implicit the information.

According to Chomsky, when we study human language, we are approaching what some might call the "human essence," the distinctive qualities of mind that are, so far as we know, unique to man. Language allows people to communicate, language communication groups studies

how people use the language in specific discourse context, to share information with others either online or face to face conversation to persuade or otherwise affect them. In the digital era, we can get so much information in just a single click through the internet. Information is a very crucial commodity that anyone can access, owing to the ease afforded to him/her by technology. Nowadays, many people quench their thirst for information via reading editorials and news online. Because of internet's immense scope, items of information posted online can reach people from different parts of the world, a feature that print media do not have.

In this paper, the researchers concentrated on editorial discourse/texts because not only are these materials readily available in printouts as well as in online media, but they also offer an overwhelming amount of information that keeps people updated about the events of the day. A newspaper editorial is mostly a concise statement, text or an article written by an editor of a newspaper, and embodies the opinion or view of the newspaper on a specific issue. As a unique writing in journalism, "editorials are of argumentative and persuasive in nature that their main objective is to influence the readers to accept the editorials' intended interpretation of news events" (Bonyadi & Samuel, 2011; Manu, 2020). As presuppositions are inferred assumptions in a statement rather than being explicitly stated, it is evident that editors value them in attaining their goal of convincing readers to accept the interpretation of issues presented by them and their publications. A newspaper cannot develop these ideas or opinions since it is not a living, breathing human individual.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The pragmatic concept of presupposition is one that originates within the tradition of philosophy of

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language (Levinson, 1983; Huang, 2007). According to Levinson, presupposition is classified as one kind of pragmatic inference based on the actual linguistic structure of sentences. He further states that the historical background of presupposition dates back to and discusses something he calls “the nature of reference and referring expressions.” Furthermore, Stalnaker (Simons, 2003) provides an explanation that a person’s truth is often taken for granted by the addressee. It is to keep in mind that presupposition is definitely different from entailment although the two may share a similarity in which they both deal with drawing assumptions. Speakers own presuppositions, not sentences (Yule, 2017). Sentences, on the other hand, are the owners of implication. Presupposition, according to Abbas, is referred to as pragmatic since it affects social connections and the present situation. Presupposition, according to Yule, is “anything that the speaker assumes to be the case before making an utterance.” in relation to the speech situation (Sudo, 2020). Put simply, presupposition refers to the phenomenon whereby speakers mark linguistically information as being taken for granted, rather than being part of the main propositional content of a speech act.” Presupposition triggers” are expressions and formulations that contain presuppositions.

This paper operates on the notion of presupposition and presupposition triggers by Huang (2007) and Yule (2008). According to them, a presupposition can be informally defined as an inference or proposition whose truth is taken for granted in the utterance of a sentence. Its primary function, they explain, is to act as a precondition of some sort for the appropriate use of the sentence. This background assumption is said to remain in force when the sentence that contains it is negated. They point that a presupposition is usually generated by the use of particular lexical items and/or linguistic constructions. Lexical items and linguistic constructions that engender presuppositions are called presupposition triggers.

Yule (2008) classifies presupposition into six types: existential, factive, non-factive, lexical, structural and counterfactual which Huang divides into two general categories namely lexical and structural presupposition triggers.

A large body of researches investigating the prevalence and function of presupposition triggers have been carried out by various researchers. For instance, Liang and Liu (2016) in their study “An Analysis of Presupposition Triggers in Hilary Clinton’s First Campaign Speech,” analyzed the presupposition triggers at both lexical and syntactic levels, with the aim of figuring out how Hilary succeeds in achieving her political intentions through the use of presupposition triggers and hoping to contribute to the composition and understanding of political speeches. In their paper, they asserted that the abundant use of presupposition triggers helps to better communicate her political messages and consequently grip her audience. These triggers were categorized in terms of ‘lexical’ and ‘syntactic’. Based on the findings of the study,

the researchers found out that presupposition triggers play an important role in strengthening information, making language more economical and vivid, motivating the interaction with the audience and drawing a closer relationship between the speaker and the audience.

Al-Zubeiry (2020) investigated the presupposition triggers in British and Saudi English newspaper opinions. The data of his study comprised a sample of 30 newspaper opinions articles selected from the Saudi Gazette and the UK Gazette (15 articles each). The results of his investigation indicated that the Saudi articles receive the highest number of presupposition triggers occurrences, that is 556 (56.60%) compared to the UK articles which receive 426 (43.40%). The results also revealed that ‘existential’ and ‘lexical’ presupposition triggers in both cases are the ones used the most, while ‘non-factive’ ‘structural’ presupposition triggers are the least. Comparison between the two cases indicated that there are considerable similarities. The few differences are not very significant; hence, it is true to say that native and non-native writers of English used presupposition triggers similarly. Based on the study findings, he implied that presupposition triggers help speakers and writers pass a lot of information to their audiences; they are used by speakers and writers to set the background of their negotiation for better and effective communication; and they are used by speakers and writers in order to mold the ideologies of their audiences. The study concludes with some pedagogical recommendations for EFL instructors in the TEFL context and suggestions for further studies on presuppositions in discourse analysis.

Primayandi (2013, cited in Al-Zubeiry, 2020) conducted a study that aimed at analyzing presupposition in the novel ‘Love in the Afternoon’ written by Lisa Kleypas. The researcher used a qualitative method in her study. She adopted Yule’s framework concerning presupposition triggers. Based on the findings of the study, presupposition triggers are found to hold a position in revealing the truthful information of the speaker’s utterances and allowing the readers get the underlying message.

In his study entitled “A Study of ‘The Presupposition of Goods Advertisements in The Jakarta Post’” Wahyudi (2007) identified the presuppositions of goods advertisements in the Jakarta Post and their types. He collected 10 advertisement and then then negated all the slogans to prove that even when negated, the presuppositions in the slogans remained in force. He concluded that the most used type of presupposition trigger is the existential type and explained presuppositions are there to help advertisements convey the idea and message without being too bold and hyperbolic.

Bonyadi and Samuel (2011) attempted to describe the linguistic nature of presupposition in American and Persian Newspaper Editorials. Using forty editorial headlines of two different newspapers, The New York Times and Tehran Times, the writers categorized them into six presupposition types. The results revealed that presupposition is employed in the editorial headlines to

persuade people despite being implicitly stated. They asserted that the presuppositions functioned to help shape and even manipulate readers. It revealed that Tehran Times employed existential presupposition twice as much than The New York Times.

Khaleel (2010) analyzed six texts from national newspapers, and she classified the type of presupposition based on the triggers per text. Her analysis demonstrated that existential presupposition was the most frequently used presupposition trigger, with the definite description as a form of trigger accompanying the type.

In a comparative study of presupposition in Ghanaian and British Newspaper editorials, Manu (2020), using a model proposed by Khaleel (2010), analyzed thirty (30) editorials from the Daily Guide (Ghanaian) and The Guardian (British) which were published in 2017. The analysis revealed some similarities and differences in the Ghanaian and British newspaper editorials. It was found that the frequently used trigger of the existential presupposition in both newspapers is the definite noun phrase. It was likewise found that the most widely-used structural trigger is the relative clause. The noticeable difference between the two is that in the Daily Guide, structural presupposition is the triggered the most (45.9%) whilst existential presupposition (69.8%) is the most triggered in 'The Guardian.'

Another study titled "An Analysis of Presupposition Triggers in English Journalistic Texts" was designed to determine the presupposition triggers of six randomly selected English journalistic texts. These texts have been sampled from six different national and regional English newspapers representing a range of political and regional differences. The national newspapers include The Independent, The Guardian, and the Daily Mirror. The regional newspapers include Liverpool Echo, The Belfast Telegraph, and The Northern Echo. According to (Biber *et al.*, 1999), these newspapers represent different readership levels. The samples are arbitrarily selected from different issues published in 2009. The study is of importance to linguists, journalists, translators, teachers and students of linguistics and education. The analysis of the data has shown that English journalistic texts rely heavily on existential presuppositions (definite descriptions) whose ratio has constituted 57.7% of the studied sample. As to the lexical triggers, they have constituted 19.7% of the studied sample. The conventional items, iterative, change of state verbs and factive items have recorded a frequency of occurrence 8, 7, 7 and 4 respectively, while no instances of other lexical triggers, like implicative verbs, verbs of judging and counterfactual verbs, have been recorded. Finally, the ratio of structural presupposition triggers has been 22.7% of the studied sample. Adverbial clauses have recurred 17 times and therefore ranking first among the other structural triggers. The category of non-restrictive clauses has occupied the second position registering five occurrences in the studied sample, whereas comparative expressions have scored three occurrences. Cleft constructions and counterfactual conditionals have

both recorded two occurrences. Finally, "wh" questions appeared once (Khaleel, 2010).

Another study was carried out by Hidayati, (2009 cited in Al-Zubeiry, 2020) analyzed the different types and meanings of presuppositions in 'Slogan in outdoor advertisements. The study was based on descriptive qualitative method. The researcher followed Yule's classification of presupposition types. The results of the study indicated that all sentences and utterances have presuppositions and they are the hidden meanings of what a writer or speaker wants to communicate.

Likewise, Fadhly and Kurnia (2015, cited in Al-Zubeiry) performed an analysis of presupposition in The Jakarta Post Daily newspaper's articles in political column. The results of the study indicated that the most frequent occurrences of presupposition were 'existential' with 202 (78.59%), followed by 'factive' with 2 (0.79%), 'lexical' with 36 (14%), structural' with 11 (4.28%), 'non-factive' with 2 (0.79%) and 'counterfactual' with 4 (1.56%). The study also revealed that both types and triggers of presuppositions were related to each other.

A recent study was carried out by Hasta and Marlina (2018). Its aim was to analyze the use of presupposition triggers in Israeli-Palestinian news in the two online news: Al-Jazeera and Fox news. The data was collected from the Israeli-Palestinian news in two online Al-Jazeera and Fox news. The results showed that in Al-Jazeera, the highest occurrence is 'existential' (definite description) that occurred 28 times (43%), and 20 times (40%) in Fox news. It was also found that Al-Jazeera and Fox news used 'change of state verb in lexical', and 'adverbial clause in structural' as the dominant types. In contrast, the difference in the two online news existed in the use of verb of judging. The study concluded that fox news was considered as more ideological news compared to the Al-Jazeera's.

Presupposition has long been used as a property of language to mold the audience's ideology. Using presupposition triggers, surprisingly the author or speaker impinges on readers or listeners' interpretation of facts and events, establishing either a favorable or unfavorable bias throughout the text (Zare *et al.*, 2012). In their study "Presupposition Trigger-A Comparative Analysis of Broadcast News Discourse" where they also employed Critical Discourse Analysis by Fairclough, Zare, Nia & Abbaspour (2012) found out that in the analysis of the chosen transcripts from the two English news channels, both varieties of oral English namely American and Persian, do put into service presupposition triggers. Using these linguistic constructions, their authors impinge on listeners' interpretation of facts and events. Schmid (2001) notes that discourse writers share their views by presenting them disguised as truths in presuppositions. Another important result the study yields is the writers' predisposition to use more factive triggers than non-factive ones. Further, their study revealed that the most frequently used presupposition trigger in both varieties of oral discourse was Existential.

In 2017, Hardiyanti, Gurning and Pulungan evaluated the way presupposition triggers assert implicit or explicit meaning in sentences, clauses, phrases and words in the articles of Toastmasters magazine. In the 18 articles of the Toastmasters Magazine, presupposition triggers namely definite description, implicative verb, factive verb, change of state verbs, verbs of judging, counterfactual verbs, conventional item, iteratives item, cleft construction, questions, adverbial clause, comparative sentence, counterfactual conditional clause, non-restrictive relative clause and other presupposition triggers are: additive particles, discourse particles, manner adverbs, quantifiers and discourse connectives, were analyzed. The result of the study indicated that the factive verb is the most frequent trigger in articles while verb of judging is the least-used one.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to analyze the data gathered for the study, mixed methods were used. The frequency of presupposition triggers was measured quantitatively, while their contribution to the editorial articles analyzed was explained qualitatively. Presupposition triggers are expressed as sentences, clauses, and phrases in the materials used for this study; these data pieces were retrieved from the websites of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin, and Philippine Star, respectively. These articles are political editorials published between September 2021 – March 2022. A total of 39 articles constitutes the corpus. After the selection of editorial articles, the researchers transferred the articles to MS Word to facilitate the reading and crucial part of identifying and categorizing the presupposition triggers. In identifying and categorizing the presupposition triggers, the researchers employed a codification system with colors corresponding specific presupposition subtype. The coded texts were categorized following Yule and Huang's classification of presupposition triggers. The analysis of presupposition triggers in the selected materials was based on Yule's six types of classification and were subdivided into two major categories given by Huang.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Presupposition Triggers

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the presupposition triggers found in the editorial articles. As can be gleaned from the table, for Philippine Daily Inquirer, lexical presupposition triggers dominated the editorial articles, appearing 492 times (86.93%) out of the 566 identified presupposition triggers, while the remaining presupposition triggers were identified to be structural with 74 occurrences (13.07%). Breaking down the presupposition triggers according to their subtypes, the most prevalent type of lexical presupposition triggers is 'existential' with 419 (81.04%) occurrences. It is followed by the 'factive' (28 or 5.69%). Meanwhile, the number of lexical presupposition triggers in the form of

iterative, implicative and change-of-state verbs occurred 28 (5.69%) times. The presupposition trigger that was least used is 'non-factive' with 17 (3.46%) occurrences. In terms of structural presupposition triggers, 'temporal' triggers were the most commonly used with 53 (71.62%) instances. It is followed by 'counterfactual triggers' with 12 (16.22%) occurrences. Next in line is pseudo-cleft and cleft sentences with 7 (1.42%) and 2 (2.70%) occurrences, respectively. The results imply that writers of the editorial articles tend to implicitly state their propositions lexically rather than structurally. These results corroborate the major findings of Al-Zubeiry (2020) in his study of Presupposition Triggers in British and Saudi English Newspaper Opinions. He found out that lexical triggers were the most frequently-used presupposition triggers while structural triggers were the least prevalent. His results also confirm the glaring ubiquity of existential triggers when compared to other presupposition trigger subtypes. Thoyyibah (2017) also offer similar results. His analyses of CNN news transcripts revealed that the most frequently used presupposition trigger in both varieties of oral discourse is existential, which reinforces the prevalence of lexical presupposition triggers as the dominant type of trigger. It can also be seen from table that, out of 307 identified presupposition triggers in the Manila Bulletin, lexical triggers have the highest frequency at 268 (87.29%), greatly outnumbering structural triggers with only 39 (12.70%) instances which is congruent to the trend found in the editorial articles from the Philippine Daily Inquirer. Of the identified 268 lexical triggers, 231 or 96.25 percent are existential, 23 (8.58%) belong to the class of iterative, implicative and change-of-state verbs, 13 (5.42%) are factive, and only one instance of non-factive. As to structural triggers, only temporal clauses were identified with neither a single occurrence of cleft nor pseudo-cleft constructions. This means that the truthfulness of meanings intended by the writers of the editorial articles are generally marked lexically rather than structurally. These results run in congruence to Khaleel (2010)'s findings which revealed that English journalistic texts rely heavily on lexical presupposition triggers particularly existential presuppositions (definite descriptions) whose ratio has constituted 57.7% of the studied sample. Makasiahe (2020) also investigated the usage and types of presupposition in "CNN" twitter social media and found out that, although different presupposition triggers were present in his analysis, the most dominant type identified was lexical presupposition with only a few instances of structural presupposition triggers. Further, it can be observed that the trend remains the same in Philippine Star's editorial articles, with lexical presupposition triggers appearing in 240 (84.81%) occasions, while the frequency count for structural triggers stands at 43 (15.19%). As to lexical triggers sub-types, 200 (83.33%) are existential, 20 (8.33%) fall under the class of iterative, implicative and change-of-state verbs, 17 (7.08%) are factive and 3 (1.25%) are non-factive. For the structural presupposition triggers, temporal clauses

appeared the most frequent (30 or 69.77%), with only one instance of pseudo cleft construction, while no occurrence at all for a cleft-construction. These results corroborate the major Al-Zubeiry (2020) in his study

of presupposition triggers in British and Saudi English Newspaper Opinions. He found out that lexical triggers were the most frequently-used presupposition triggers while structural triggers were the least prevalent.

Table 1: Presupposition Triggers along the three Philippine Dailies.

| Philippine Dailies | Lexical | | | | | | Structural | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|-------|
| | Existential | Factive | Non-Factive | Iterative | Implicative | Aspectual | Temporal | Cleft | Pseudo-Cleft | Counterfactual | |
| Philippine Daily Inquirer | 419 (85.16) | 28 (5.69) | 17 (3.46) | 18 (3.66) | 2 (0.41) | 8 (1.63) | 53 (71.62) | 2 (2.70) | 7 (1.42) | 12 (16.22) | 566 |
| Manila Bulletin | 231 (96.25) | 13 (5.42) | 1 (0.42) | 13 (5.42) | 2 (0.83) | 8 (1.33) | 27 (11.25) | - | - | 12(5) | 307 |
| Philippine Star | 200 (83.33) | 17 (7.08) | 3 (1.25) | 11 (4.58) | 1 (0.42) | 8 (3.33) | 30 (69.77) | - | 1 (2.33) | 12 (27.91) | 283 |

The Contribution of Presupposition Triggers to the Realization of the Writer’s intended Meaning and Intentions

Presuppositions, according to Huang (2007), can be informally defined as an inference or proposition whose truth is taken for granted in the utterance of a sentence. Their primary function is to act as a precondition of some sort for the appropriate use of the sentence. Presuppositions, as will be demonstrated in the selected articles, are usually generated by the use of particular lexical items and/or linguistic expressions. These lexical items and linguistic constructions that engender presuppositions are called presupposition triggers.

In all three Philippine dailies (Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin and Philippine Star), the trend suggests that the editorial articles are replete with presuppositions that are engendered lexically, rather than structurally. The intended meanings and intentions of the writers of the editorial articles are predominantly signaled by lexical triggers such as existential, factive, non-factive and iterative, implicative and change-of-state verbs.

Lexical Presupposition

Existential presupposition

Existential presupposition is the assumption of the existence of the entities named by the speaker (Nurchaerani & Intani, 2019). It is usually triggered by definite descriptions in noun phrases (proper names), possessive constructions, and certain wh-phrases (Huang, 2007). Existential presupposition dominated all three (3) dailies (Philippine Daily Inquirer with, (419) Manila Bulletin has (231), and Philippine Star with (200). In the extracts that follow, readers are likely to arrive at the right inference especially on the existence of entities because the presuppositions are signaled by definite descriptions and possessive constructions.

E1. Commission on Elections spokesperson James Jimenez, however, said such admission was not enough ground to disqualify any candidate.

»There is a Comelec Spokesperson

E2. The town mayor herself being shot inside her car shortly after she attended Sunday mass.

»The town mayor has a car.

E3. PNP chief Gen. Dionardo Carlos was asked for an update on the background checks of all the presidential bets in the wake of Duterte’s latest pronouncements.

»There is a PNP Chief General

E4. ...all members of the Senate and the House of Representatives voted as one when they unanimously approved a measure extending the voter registration deadline for the national elections in 2022.

» The Senate and House of Representatives exist.

E5 – Her death in August 2009 created a groundswell of public support

»Someone died.

In extract E1-E16, the noun phrases Commission on Elections spokesperson James Jimenez, The town mayor, PNP chief Gen. Dionardo Carlos, members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and her death indicate the existence of people and agencies of the government.

Factive Presupposition

A factive presupposition, Thoyyibah (2017) explains, is the assumption that something is true due to the presence of some words such as "know," "realize," "be glad," "be sorry," "regret," "aware," "odd" etc. Factives are generally taken as one of the canonical classes of presupposition triggers (Schueler, 2013), and when a factive verb is, one is committed to the truth of the proposition expressed in the 'that-clause' which follows.

F1 – And just as the number of COVID-19 cases in our neck of the woods steadily goes down, with the OCTA

Research Group noting that a 29-percent decrease in daily infections in the week Nov. 21-27 led to an average 954 cases...

F2 - The weary observer may wonder if there is a connection between the lowered job target and the fact that 50,895 of the target number of 160,000 volunteers were still needed four days before the Nov. 29-Dec. 1 blitz.

F3 - That was the first duel between the two, when in December last year, the DFA chief bared that the government had missed out on a chance to secure 10 million doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine

F4 - It was proven that Marcos Jr. did not pay his taxes for four years when he was vice governor.

F5 - Guanzon, the presiding officer of the Comelec's first division which is handling three disqualification cases against Marcos Jr., revealed last week that she had voted "to DQ (disqualify)" the candidate who was "convicted of an offense involving moral turpitude."

In the extracts (F1-F5), F1 presupposes >>a 29-percent decrease in daily infections; F2 presupposes >> 50,895 of the target number of 160,000 volunteers were still needed four days before the Nov. 29-Dec. 1 blitz; F3 presupposes >> the government had missed out on a chance to secure 10 million doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine; F4 presupposes >> Marcos Jr. did not pay his taxes for four years when he was vice governor; and F5 presupposes >> Guanzon had voted "to DQ (disqualify)" the candidate who was "convicted of an offense involving moral turpitude". Due to the presence of factive triggers, readers are guided to take the presuppositions generated by the different utterances as factual propositions.

Non-Factive Presupposition

Non-factive presupposition is an assumption referred to something that is not true (Thoyyibah, 2017). It is indicated by verbs like dream, imagine, pretend, etc. (Yule, 1996 cited in Al-Zubeiry, 2020). A few instances of non-factive presupposition have been identified, indicating the writer's attitude toward the statement in the subordinate clauses.

Nf1 - Withdrawals could lead the voting public to believe that the candidate who withdrew, or even the political party or substituting candidate, is not really serious.

Nf2 - With the health agency claiming that it had already ordered 44 million syringes even before the World Health Organization (WHO) warned of a possible shortage of syringes for COVID-19 vaccines, one wonders why the DOH was still caught flat-footed by the syringe shortage on the eve of its much-publicized three-day national vaccination drive.

Nf3 - I believe there is political interference here

Nf4 - They think if I retire my vote will not count, which is not true.

Nf5 - I suppose we were the failure.

With the non-factive verbs, what is triggered are to be taken in a sense that the writers are not committed to the truth of the proposition expressed in the 'that-clause'.

Non-factive predicates indicate that the writer does not grant factual status to the proposition in the 'that-clause', not that s/he considers the proposition to be false.

Iterative Presupposition

Iterative expressions are lexical items that indicate repetition including verbs and adverbs such as repeat, restore, re-establish, again, too, more, and another. They presuppose previous existence of certain action or state (Liang & Liu, 2016). The following extracts demonstrate the use of iterative items:

It1 - Better late than never for such officials to rediscover this basic requirement for honest public service, over five years into an administration that has flouted and ignored the law.

Officials had once known (conformed to) the basic requirement of honesty in public service.

The iterative verb rediscover in (It1) presupposes that officials used to know and practice the virtue of honesty in public service. Because some officials have flouted the law on the submission of sworn SALN, the writer uses the iterative verb to remind public officials that the submission of SALN is not only a constitutional requirement among public officials, but a manifestation of transparency.

It2 - There's also the Malacañang faction of the PDP-Laban party, led by Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi that formally asked the Comelec to reopen the filing of certificates of candidacy (COC) and postpone the printing of election ballots.

The filing of COCs has already ended.

The writer in (It2) made use of the iterative verb reopen to presuppose that the filing of certificates of candidacy has already closed or ended. The use of the lexical trigger here only serves to prepare readers of the text that follows which states that despite the request, the governing body (Comelec) has unanimously dismissed the petition.

It3 - The remaining four commissioners must pull together and show the public that they can perform their job with integrity and honor. The Comelec, too, must show utmost resolve to rise above doubts on its ability to safeguard the sanctity of the ballot.

The Comelec is expected to safeguard the sanctity of the ballot.

The iterative word too in (It3) indirectly tells readers that not only the four remaining commissioners have the job of performing what is expected of them with integrity and honor (the decision on the disqualification case of a presidential aspirant) but so does the Comelec (attend to reports of hacking and ensure a safe election)

It4 - Voting out the prospect of another martial law might well be our version of Edsa this year.

Martial law has once occurred.

In (It4), the iterative word another triggers the

presupposition that a Martial law once befallen the country. Here, the readers are not only directed to make the inference of the existence of a martial law in the past, but the writer is also indirectly urging readers to vote for someone who could possibly cause a second martial law. It5 – America is running for reelection in May under the banner of the Nacionalista Party.

America is a currently seated official.

The iterative item reelection in (It5) aids readers in inferring that America is currently installed into office as a Mayor, and is seeking re-election. Here, the writer uses the iterative with the aim of connecting her mayoral bid to the shooting incident she figured in.

Implicative Presupposition

In addition to factive verbs which presuppose the truth of their complement sentence, and its opposite group non-factive verbs, a number of other interesting classes of verbs take sentential complements. Implicative verbs such as manage also involve presuppositions, although in a different way. An implicative verb carries a presupposition of some necessary and sufficient condition which alone determines whether the event described in the complement took place (<https://web.stanford.edu/>). The number of occurrences of implicative verbs in the selected editorial articles is scarce, but nonetheless warrant discussion.

Im1 – How could Filipinos have forgotten the horrors of one of the darkest eras in Philippine history?

The horrors of one of the darkest eras in Philippine history have taken place.

The verb forget (in this case its present perfect aspect) indicates the presupposition that the horrors of one of the darkest eras in Philippine history have taken place.

Im2 – Those who dared protest students, teachers, activists, farmers, and suspected dissidents were arrested, tortured, disappeared, or salvaged.

The protest has taken place along with the arrest, torture, disappearance and salvage.

The implicative verb dare carries a presupposition of some necessary and sufficient condition which alone determines that what is contained in the sentence complement has in fact taken place.

Aspectual/Change-of-state Presupposition

Aspectual or Change-of-state verbs are the verbs which involve the shift of a kind of behavior or state. They presuppose that something has been in certain place or state before. Verbs in this category include stop, begin, continue, finish, change, cease, come, go, etc. (Liang & Liu, 2016).

As1 – The economy remains moribund, overseas Filipino workers are still a major contributor to GDP, a few prominent families continue to hold sway over local and national politics.

Prominent families have been holding sway over local and national politics

As2 – By May next year, COVID vaccination would be much advanced, but the health risks would still be there as variants continue to emerge.

Variants of the virus have been emerging

As3 – The campaigning will be conducted even as COVID-19 continues to rage

COVID-19 has been raging

As4 – ...the country continues to grapple with the COVID threat.

The country has been grappling with the COVID threat.

As5 – COVID infections have decelerated following last month's surge driven by the highly infectious Omicron variant.

COVID infections were higher last month.

The presuppositions in extracts (As1-As4) are triggered by the aspectual verb continue, which indicates that the events have taken and are still taking place. In As1, the writer uses the trigger to presuppose something which in turn is used as an exemplification of his thesis 'How could Filipinos have forgotten the horrors of one of the darkest eras in Philippine history?' found in the introduction of the editorial. In As2-As4, although different verbs are found in the infinitive phrases (emerge, rage, grapple), the presupposition trigger (continue) impresses upon readers that the event (COVID) has been in the state described in the infinitive phrases. The writer here does not only use the trigger to presuppose something, but to also warn the nation that COVID still persists. In As5, have decelerated presupposes a prior state of an event, in this case, the surge in COVID infections. Through the use of the aspectual verb decelerate, the writers hope to inform readers about the state of events.

Structural Presupposition

As have been demonstrated in the frequency count of presupposition triggers, only more than 10 percent of the total identified triggers are structural. Structural presupposition refers to a certain sentence structures that have been analyzed as conventionally and regularly presupposing that part of the structure is already assumed to be true. One might say that speakers can use such structures to treat information as presupposed and hence to be accepted as true by the listeners (Golek, 2016). The structural triggers identified in the editorial articles come in the form of temporal expressions, cleft sentences and counterfactual conditionals.

Temporal Presupposition

Some presuppositions are said to be generated through expressions of temporal relations or connectives such as after, before, while, since, when, among others. Notice

that in the following extracts, the writers are instructing the readers to take the utterances in the temporal clause to be true or to have taken place. This presuppositional feature of conjunctions like after, before, when, as, etc. is used to make a link to the previous discourse. Roughly speaking, the discourse semantics of such conjunctions are described by Schilder (1999) as sentential relation holding between the situation described by the main clause and the subordinated temporal clause.

T1 – It wasn't too long ago when Puyat's Department of Tourism, along with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, firmly backed the ban.

The Department of Tourism firmly backed the ban.

T2 – But the group Natives of Boracay and Business Stakeholders Inc. is “extremely dismayed and disappointed” at the President's move, and has urged the government to address the island's major concerns overcrowding, solid waste management, sewerage, and stable water and power supply “before allowing more developments to sprout on [it].”

There have already been developments.

T3 – But since it's election time, the President, who confounded the public by deciding to run for senator, has whipped up a brand-new promise.

It is election time.

T4 – The heated back-and-forth between the two officials underscores the continuing disarray at the top as the pandemic grinds into its second year.

The pandemic is in its second year.

T5 – To Comelec's credit, it unanimously dismissed the petition of the PDP-Laban Cusi wing, even if it meant that the ruling political party would end up with no presidential and vice-presidential bets, as the COC filing had ended on Oct. 8.

COC filing had already ended.

T6 – It was proven that Marcos Jr. did not pay his taxes for four years when he was vice governor and later governor of Ilocos Norte.

Marcos Jr. was once a vice governor and governor of Ilocos Norte.

T7 – ...cooperation in the Senate probe on COVID fund utilization would be much better, especially since the nation is now up to its neck in debt to finance the pandemic response.

The nation is now up to its neck in debt to finance the pandemic response.

T8 – The peace in the bucolic town was shattered over the weekend, with the town mayor herself being shot inside her car shortly after she attended Sunday mass.

The town mayor attended Sunday mass.

T9 – While Comelec rules allow the display of campaign materials on private property, it has stood firm on its takedown of oversized materials.

Comelec rules allow the display of campaign materials on private property.

T10 – Pending any “acts of God” that may happen before the Commission on Election (COMELEC) closes its door today, Nov. 15, 2021, we would finally (“finally” is the operative word here) have our official list of candidates for the 2022 national election.

>> The Commission on Election (COMELEC) closes its door today, Nov. 15, 2021.

Cleft Sentences

It is generally accepted that cleft sentences convey logical presuppositions (Delin 1992). Cleft sentences have traditionally been viewed as divided into two parts, whereby the cleaved constituent expresses a focus and the cleft clause expresses a presupposition (Hedberg, n.d.). Two types of cleft sentences have been identified in the editorial articles, it-cleft and pseudo-cleft. It-clauses are the most common type of cleft clause. The information that comes after it is emphasized for the reader. The clause which follows the ‘it-clause’ is connected using that and it contains information that is already understood. We often omit that in informal situations when it is the object of the verb. Pseudo-clefts, on the other hand, are “divisions of the sentence into two clauses, each with its own verb” and “all the elements of the clause as a message are organized into two constituents [...] linked by a relationship of identity, a kind of ‘equals sign’, expressed by some form of the verb be” (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, cited in Zhou & Chen, 2021). Pseudo-clefts are “tools for presenting and highlighting new information” (Bondi, 2017, cited in Zhou & Chen, 2021), serving as the building blocks of a coherent discourse progression, and a rhetorical toolkit to construct an authorial stance, being a grammatical resource for making evaluative meaning. Only a few instances of cleft sentences have been noted: It-C1 – It is the young who have taken the biggest hit in this crisis

The young have taken the biggest hit in the crisis.

Ps-C1 - what's at stake in this election is the will of the people.

The will of the people is at stake in the election.

PsC2 – “What she deserves is recognition and appreciation for her commitment to the welfare and human rights of our Filipino sisters and brothers who are most in need.”

She deserves recognition and appreciation for her commitment to the welfare and human rights of our Filipino sisters and brothers who are most in need.

Counterfactual Conditionals

Counterfactual conditionals are presupposition triggers in which the assumption that what is presupposed is not only untrue, but is the opposite of what is true, or contrary to facts. For instance, some conditional structures, generally called counterfactual conditionals, presuppose that the information, in the if- clauses, is not true at the time of utterance. The following extracts are illustrative examples of the item under investigation.

Cf1 – But when asked if Sara Duterte who is not his partymate would eventually substitute for him, Dela Rosa said: “Eh ‘di mas maganda. By all means, I will give way.”

Sarah Duterte has not yet substituted Dela Rosa.

Cf2 - According to acting presidential spokesperson Karlo Nograles, should Mr. Duterte win in the senatorial race in the 2022 elections, he may release his SALN as long as it is required in the upper chamber of Congress.

Mr. Duterte has not yet won the senatorial race.

Cf3 – “How many lives would (have been) saved” had the vaccines come in earlier and “been made available to Filipinos?”

Many lives have not been saved.

Cf4 – ... if the claim were found to be untrue, reparations can be made to resurrect tarnished reputations.

The claim has not yet been found to be true.

Cf5 – Enforcement can be a problem for the DepEd, especially if teachers themselves are the ones breaking the rules.

Teachers are not the ones breaking the rules.

Cf6 – Acedillo noted that if grounded on facts and evidence, the President’s pronouncement will be helpful to the voters still on the fence...

The president’s pronouncement has not yet been determined to be grounded on facts and evidence.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that editorial articles abound with presupposition triggers, both lexically and structurally. The meanings intended by the writers of the editorial articles and their authorial stance, are however, largely done through lexical means (i.e. their presuppositions are triggered by a certain word or phrase).

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