

# Modern Understanding of Presupposition in The Framework of Cognitive Linguistics

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**Abstract:** This article examines the concept of presupposition within the framework of cognitive linguistics, offering a modern interpretation that extends beyond traditional formal and pragmatic approaches. It focuses on how presuppositions are rooted in mental representations, background knowledge, and conceptual structures that shape meaning in discourse. The study explores key cognitive mechanisms—such as mental spaces, frames, and conceptual integration—that contribute to the generation and interpretation of presuppositional content. By emphasizing the dynamic, context-sensitive nature of presupposition, the article highlights its role in the interaction between language and cognition, and underscores the importance of considering cognitive factors in linguistic analysis.

**Keywords:** Presupposition, cognitive linguistics, background knowledge, language and cognition, contextual meaning.

**Introduction:** In order for an understanding of a text or utterance to become adequate, certain conditions are necessary that make it possible to explicate the implicit informative content of the text, that is, presuppositions or presumptions. However, currently in linguistics both terms are used as synonyms, without having certain restrictions. The issue of distinguishing the essential features that are the basis of the new classification of these phenomena is also controversial. Even the very definition of the concept of “presupposition” is not single-valued and is interpreted by linguists in different ways. In this regard, it seems advisable, after analyzing the work of linguists, to determine the scope of the concepts of “presupposition”.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the theoretical foundations of understanding the terms “presupposition”, to explore approaches to the problem of their definition, to establish the relationship of these concepts in modern cognitive linguistics. A number of scientists identify the concepts of “background knowledge” and «presupposition. A.M. Peshkovsky, saying that speech is elliptical in nature, which is due to the tendency of any person not to finish his thoughts, that is, in an utterance, the information

that is clear to those who speak from. He uses the term «previous experience» as a synonym for the concepts of “background knowledge” and “presupposition”. In turn, N.S. Valgina understands presuppositions as implicitly expressed “prior knowledge” that allows one to adequately perceive the text [1, p. 10]. Since the participants of communication, when producing an utterance, do not explicate that part of the information, which is not individual knowledge, and it refers to the base of general background knowledge, any statement from the formal side is elliptical, while it is absolutely complete in semantic terms. In this regard, background knowledge is recognized by scientists as one of the necessary conditions for successful communication.

## METHODS

N.S. Valgina considers the main criterion for classifying background knowledge to be the sign of the content of background knowledge, according to which background knowledge is divided into everyday, pre-scientific, scientific, literary and artistic. In addition, she suggests classifying background knowledge as trivial and non-trivial. As one of the means of creating a subtext, the author considers individual background

knowledge separately [1, p. 11].

Classifications of background knowledge in modern linguistics vary. V.Y. Shabes writes about the extralinguistic components of a communicative act, including background knowledge. The scientist classifies background knowledge into social (knowledge possessed by all communicants before the beginning of the speech act), individual (knowledge possessed by two participants in communication before the beginning of the speech act) and collective (knowledge possessed by team members) [2, pp. 7-11].

According to another classification proposed by E.M. Vereshchagin and N.M. Kostomarov, background knowledge is divided into four types: universal, regional, regional, and social (professional) background knowledge [3, pp. 160-165, 210]. With the development of cognitive linguistics, new terms “frame”, “concept”, and “gestalt” have been added to the vocabulary of scientists. In this article, we use the term “frame” as a kind of core and all the associations associated with it based on community knowledge, that is, as a certain type of background knowledge.

In addition to using the term “background knowledge” as a synonym for the term “presupposition”, a number of scientists use the terms “preliminary agreement” and “general knowledge fund”. For example, in G.A. Zolotov, presuppositions are understood as the «fund of general knowledge», the past experience of communication participants, or in other words, the “preliminary agreement”, the “tacit prerequisite” of the communication process. She defines presuppositions as “the relations that exist between linguistic phenomena and extra-linguistic phenomena in a speech act. In the most general form It can be argued that the problem of presuppositions is the problem of non-verbal conditions of speech acts that ensure a correct understanding of the utterance” [4, p. 213].

## RESULTS

As communicatively relevant elements in the meaning of a sentence that are directly related to the psychological, logical and social aspects of people’s speech activity, presuppositions are considered in the work of L.V. Lisochenko [5, p. 1]. Presuppositions are based on the extralinguistic knowledge of communicants, as well as their social experience. The following types of presuppositions are characterized in works on linguistics: existential (non-operational), linguistic, pragmatic, communicative, semantic, logical (operational). In linguistic research of the last century, the scope of the term “existential presupposition” fully correlated with the scope of the term “presupposition of existence.” In modern linguistics, this volume has

expanded significantly and the term non-operational presupposition has become used as a synonym.

In this article, existential presupposition is identified with extralinguistic knowledge about the surrounding reality, about phenomena and objects of the real world, about their interdependence and interaction. Currently, due to the development of pragmalinguistics and communicative grammar, it is customary to distinguish the following subtypes of existential presupposition: the actual existential presupposition (correlates with extralinguistic knowledge participants in the speech act), pragmatic presupposition (defined as knowledge of the pragmatic features of the communication process) and communicative presupposition (corresponds to knowledge of the communicative purpose of the speech act). A. F Papina divides presuppositions into explicit and implicit. She refers to an implicit presupposition as a semantic presupposition. In her interpretation, the semantic presumption includes «the authorship of the work, the time and place of its writing, the time and place of the described events, the social status of society and the author, his mood at the time of the creation of the work, the reasons, which prompted the author to write this text» [6, p. 331].

By explicit presupposition, the author understands a linguistic presupposition, which consists in the fact that the title of a work contains an antecedent, which can be repeated several times in the text using a pronoun with reference to the antecedent. Thus, in her opinion, the linguistic presupposition reflects the thought expressed in the main sentence by the mental predicate and expanded in the subordinate explanatory sentence. For example: “It was reported that water pollution occurred due to flooding”. In another aspect, the concept of linguistic presupposition is considered by L.V. Lisochenko. The author refers to this type of presuppositions as knowledge of linguistic reality, features of linguistic structure and paradigmatic relations in the language system, which are significant in the production, explication and understanding of implicit information [5, p. 15].

## DISCUSSION

The term “logical presupposition” is equivalent to the term “operational presupposition”. Such presuppositions are characterized by the derivation of implicit meaning by establishing logical connections between explicitly expressed information and the “background of general knowledge”, represented in the minds of communicants, but not having a linguistic projection in speech. Using the terms of formal logic, the operational presupposition correlates with the operations of logical inference, namely: with the

immediate and indirect inference. In turn, the causal relationship characteristic of inferences is expressed in the presence of a larger premise, a smaller premise, and a conclusion based on them.

However, such a complete formula for the realization of an inference is found only in mathematical sciences, while natural language tends to explicate in speech an abbreviated version of the inference with the omission of one of the parts of the syllogistic structure. Such a reduced syllogism is called an enthymeme. Instead of the term “operational presupposition” can be used the term “presumption”. In his interpretation, presumptions are those components of the content that the author of the text considers not to require proof and known to the recipient, as well as having the property of maintaining their truth in denial. If, in the process of communication, the recipient's presumptions do not correspond to the recipient's actual knowledge, then the recipient perceives them as implicitly produced messages.

The term presumption is also found in the work of E.V. Paducheva, written in 1985. She first attributes the use of this term to the mathematician and philosopher Gottlob Frege in 1892, who identified only existential presumptions in the narrow sense of the term, that is, presumptions that reveal the connections between names and descriptions. “If we assert something, there is always a presumption that all simple and complex names in our statement have denotations” [7, p. 54].

Currently, the scope of the term «presumption» is broader. According to E.V. Paducheva, “presumption is a semantic component of a sentence., not expressed in it with sufficient explicitness” [7, p. 122]. In her opinion, “the concept of presumption opens up ways to more fully model a person's abilities to extract information contained in a language text”. The scientist emphasizes that in any text, along with explicitly expressed information, there is information that is not expressed explicitly, but is implied and correctly interpreted by communicants, that is, all kinds of implications, connotations, implicatures, plausible conclusions, consequences, conjunctures, etc. Thus, the analysis of theoretical studies has shown that the terms “presupposition” do not have an unambiguous interpretation and are sometimes identified by scientists.

## CONCLUSION

In this article, we consider it appropriate to distinguish between these terms. Presuppositions are understood as frames related to the fund of community knowledge, extralinguistic and linguistic knowledge of communicants, expressed implicitly and requiring explicit expression only in the presence of a

communication failure. In the process of communication and in the generation of the text, the author decides on the correlation of explicit and implicit information. The choice in favor of the predominance of one or another type of information is conditioned simultaneously by the author's desire to facilitate the perception and understanding of the produced text, that is, to express the thought as explicitly as possible, as well as by the desire to save speech-thinking efforts, that is, by the desire for implicitness, which makes it possible to have a greater emotional impact on the interlocutor. Any situation is a multicomponent structure in which smaller propositions can be distinguished, which are an integral part of this situation.

As a rule, in a finished work, due to the economy of speech-thinking efforts, insignificant propositions do not have a linguistic projection, that is, they are eliminated in the text, presented implicitly, but at the same time they are easily restored by the recipient from the explicitly expressed components. The presence of implicit propositions does not violate textual unity, since the implicit content is easy to reconstruct if there is a failure in understanding or communication, if it is embedded in the “fund of general knowledge”. Presumptions in our understanding are implicit propositions that, in the presence of a communication failure, are explicated through logical inference operations: direct and indirect inference, a simple categorical or conditionally categorical syllogism. Any syllogism includes three propositions: the larger premise, the smaller premise, and the conclusion. If at least one link of the syllogism is missing, logical conclusions are impossible. In natural language, not all the links of a syllogism have a linguistic projection, as a rule, one logical link is reduced. This process is explained by the ability of human thinking to preserve the eliminated

The judgment has no linguistic form, but it is palpable for the respondent who speaks the same natural language. Implicit content that does not have However, it is perceived and interpreted by the recipient. In this case, a thought that is not expressed explicitly and without its own linguistic projection presented indirectly through the interaction of other linguistic forms. Only the verbally expressed linguistic form is eliminated, but the very process of thought is preserved. The language projection is always smaller than the text content, which is due to the laws of economy speeches. In any utterance, all three judgments of the syllogism are present in an implicit form, while the explicit form is an enthymeme. In logic, an enthymeme is a syllogism in which one of the judgments is reduced: a large premise, a smaller

premise or conclusion. The connection between the sentences of the syllogism is carried out mentally on the basis of the three terms of the syllogism present in the forms of language, sufficient to represent the complete conclusion. Thus, in the actual practice of thinking and speaking enthymemes act as a linguistic projection of reduced conclusions when generating a text and serve as a means of enhancing the implicitness of the text.

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