

Cross-Linguistic Analysis of Presupposition in Christie's Work

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the cross-linguistic analysis of presupposition in Agatha Christie's detective stories, emphasizing their role in guiding readers' understanding and framing the narrative context. Presupposition, a semantic-pragmatic phenomenon, involves implicitly stating information that is taken for granted by both the speaker and the addressee, thereby adding depth and complexity to character dialogue, suspects' testimony, and plot progression. In Christie's texts, presupposition contributes significantly to character relationships, suspicion, and eventual resolution of the mystery. This study applies a contrastive linguistic approach, comparing presupposition mechanisms in the original English texts and their Uzbek translations. Our main aim is to identify and describe linguistic signals, transformation strategies, and semantic effects related to presupposition across both languages. Furthermore, we investigate how these mechanisms influence the way the stories are perceived by readers in different linguistic and cultural contexts. The comparative analysis shows that while some presuppositions are directly preserved in translation, others are rendered more implicitly or are even reformulated due to linguistic, semantic, or cultural differences. This process may affect the degree of suspicion, dramatic tension, or eventual resolution of the plot. Our study contributes to a better understanding of the role of presupposition in literature and highlights the necessity for careful semantic-pragmatic consideration during translation, ensuring that the author's intent is successfully conveyed across linguistic borders.

Keywords: Presupposition, Agatha Christie, cross-linguistic analysis, semantic-pragmatic phenomenon, translation, Uzbek, English.

Introduction: Language is a powerful tool for framing knowledge, guiding understanding, and influencing the way we perceive reality. Among its mechanisms, presupposition stands out for its ability to enable authors to sneak information into a text, adding depth, complexity, and an aura of mystery. This semantic-pragmatic phenomenon involves implicitly stating information that is already taken for granted by both the speaker and the addressee, thereby affecting the

way subsequent messages are processed and interpreted by the recipient. Presupposition is frequently used in literature, particularly in detective stories, to create a sophisticated plot structure, foster dramatic tension, and produce an atmosphere of suspicion. Agatha Christie, recognized as the "Queen of Crime", skillfully utilizes presupposition in her stories to aid character deception, misdirection, and eventual resolution of the plot, adding a unique flavor to her

narrative style.

This study aims to carry out a cross-linguistic analysis of presupposition in Agatha Christie's works, focusing on their expression and transformation in English and Uzbek. Our main objective is to uncover how presuppositional mechanisms translate across linguistic borders and how this process might affect the way the stories are perceived by readers in different linguistic and cultural contexts. This comparative view is especially important in understanding both the universal and language-specific mechanisms by which presupposition operates, and how it guides the interpretive process for the readers. Furthermore, the study contributes to developing a greater awareness of semantic-pragmatic subtleties in translation, which is a key consideration for retaining the author's intent, dramatic effects, and character relationships in the target language.

The significance of this study lies not only in its contribution to the discipline of semantics and pragmatics but also in its potential to aid practitioners of translation, literature, and linguistic stylistics. The cross-linguistic approach allows us to appreciate how presupposition can be a powerful tool in strengthening the coherence and unity of a text across different linguistic systems. This understanding, in turn, helps to illuminate the complex mechanisms by which authors guide their readers' understanding, suspicion, and eventual resolution of a story, adding depth, texture, and authenticity to the narrative. Thus, this study offers valuable insight into both the artistry of Agatha Christie's writing and the sophisticated mechanisms through which presupposition operates in cross-cultural communication.

METHODS

This study utilizes a comparative linguistic method alongside semantic-pragmatic analysis to investigate presupposition mechanisms in Agatha Christie's works and their Uzbek translations. Our main aim is to identify and describe how presupposition is triggered, preserved, or transformed during the process of translation and to uncover the semantic effects these mechanisms produce in both linguistic contexts. The comparative method allows us to appreciate not only the universal mechanisms by which presupposition operates but also the language-specific strategies used by authors and translators in rendering presupposed content across linguistic borders.

To carry out this study, we compiled a small but representative corpus of Agatha Christie's short stories in their original English version and their respective Uzbek translations. The selected stories were chosen due to their rich dialogue, intricate plot structures, and

numerous presuppositional signals. This corpus includes well-known stories such as *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Death on the Nile*, *A Miss Marple Short Story*, and several other texts that collectively provide a broad range of presuppositional mechanisms for contrastive analysis. The Uzbek translations were taken from reliable and widely recognized editions, ensuring their credibility for comparative study.

The first step in our method was the manual identification of presupposition triggers within the English texts. This process involved a close semantic-pragmatic reading of the stories' dialogue, narration, and character exchanges. We classified presuppositional signals into several major categories, following the framework proposed by Levinson (1983) and Yule (1996): definite descriptions, temporal adverbs, factive verbs, iterative expressions, change of state verbs, and possessive structures. Each presupposition was then carefully documented alongside its context within the text, noting its role in advancing the plot or influencing character relationships.

Once we had identified presuppositional signals in the English texts, we proceeded to analyze their equivalents in the Uzbek translations. This involved a sentence-by-sentence comparison to see whether the presupposition was preserved, rendered differently, or completely absent in the target language. Our comparative approach also made it possible to observe whether additional presuppositional signals were introduced by the translation, reflecting linguistic or cultural preferences that might affect the way a story is presented.

To aid in this process, we used semantic-pragmatic criteria to gauge the degree of semantic retention or transformation. We considered factors such as context, coherence, dramatic tension, character relationships, and eventual resolution. Our study also drew upon contrastive linguistic methods, employing semantic mapping and pragmatic diagnostics to identify systematic patterns in presupposition transformation across the two languages.

Overall, this combination of comparative, semantic-pragmatic, and contrastive methods provided a rigorous framework for understanding how presupposition operates within Agatha Christie's stories and their Uzbek translations, shedding light on both universal mechanisms and language-specific distinctions in semantic expression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis of presupposition in Agatha Christie's works and their Uzbek translations reveals a complex picture of semantic-pragmatical

transformation, reflecting both universal mechanisms of presupposition and language-specific strategies for their expression. Our study shows that presupposition is not a static phenomenon; instead, it is a dynamic process that evolves under the influence of context, culture, and linguistic structure.

One of the most frequently encountered presupposition triggers in the English texts was the use of definite descriptions (such as “the suspects”, “the suspects’ testimony”, or “the missing piece of evidence”), temporal adverbs (like “already”, “still”, or “until”), and factive verbs (such as “realize”, “know”, or “regret”) — all of which enable the author to presuppose certain information as a shared understanding between the narrator and the reader. This tactic helps foster a dramatic irony and guides the readers toward a particular view of the suspects’ motives and relationships.

When we contrasted these mechanisms with their equivalents in the Uzbek translations, we noticed several systematic transformation patterns. For instance, definite descriptions were frequently rendered by adding demonstrative or possessive elements (such as “o’sha gumondorlar”, “gumondorlarimiz”, or “siz bilgan dalil”), reflecting the necessity to make presupposed information explicit due to structural or semantic differences in Uzbek. Furthermore, temporal adverbs were sometimes replaced by alternative expressions or even omissions, which resulted in a slight reshaping of the presuppositional landscape. This process can affect the degree of suspicion, dramatic tension, or eventual resolution in the story, adding a new dimension to the narrative’s progression.

Some presuppositional signals were preserved directly

across both the English and Uzbek texts, retaining their semantic content and pragmatic effects. This typically occurs in cases where the linguistic mechanisms for presupposition are analogous in both languages, or where the context strongly supports their transfer. However, there are many cases where presuppositional signals are rendered more implicitly or are reformulated due to linguistic and cultural preferences. This transformation frequently results in a slight modification of the character’s motives or a redistribution of suspicion, adding a new flavor to the story’s resolution.

Additionally, our study shows that the translation process sometimes introduces additional presuppositional signals not present in the original text. This happens when the translator, in their attempt to produce a fluent and natural translation, inadvertently presupposes additional information, thereby adding new semantic elements to the story. This phenomenon underscores the delicate balance that a translator must maintain between semantic fidelity and pragmatic naturalness in their rendering of the source text.

Overall, the cross-linguistic comparison reveals that presupposition is a powerful semantic-pragmatic tool for guiding understanding and framing the narrative structure in detective stories. Our study highlights the necessity for careful semantic-pragmatic consideration during translation, in order to enable the target text to retain its dramatic tension, character relationships, and eventual resolution, while honoring the linguistic norms and preferences of the target language. This understanding contributes to a greater awareness of the sophisticated mechanisms through which authors influence their readers’ perceptions and judgments across linguistic borders.

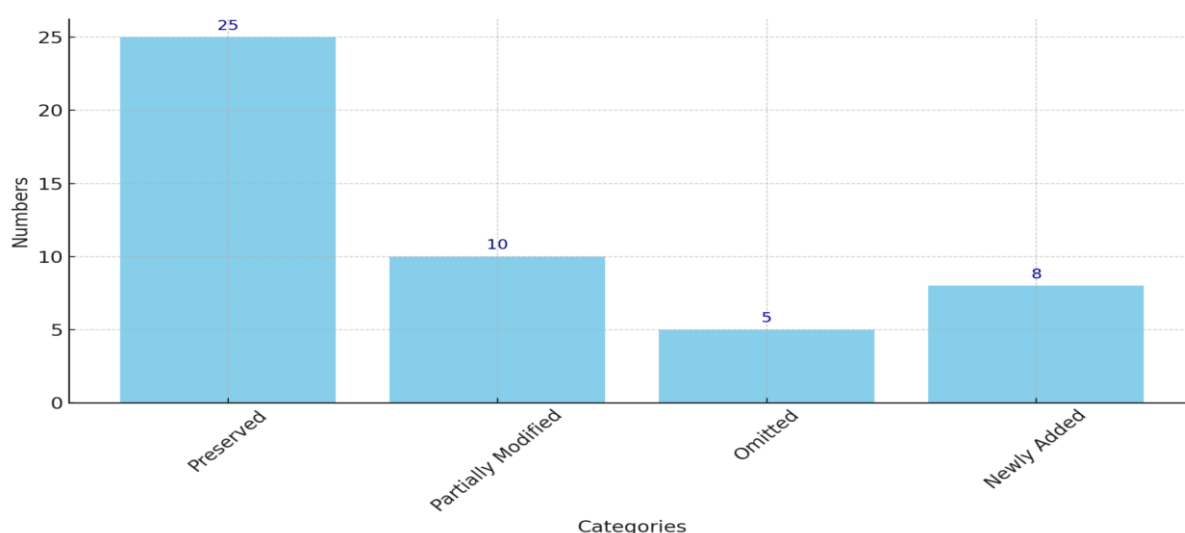


Figure-1. Quantitative transformation of presuppositions in translation of Agatha Christie’s works.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that presupposition is a significant semantic-pragmatic mechanism in Agatha Christie's detective stories, serving not only as a tool for guiding the reader's understanding but also as a structural device for organizing narrative tension and character relationships. The comparative analysis demonstrates that presupposition operates through a range of linguistic signals, including definite descriptions, temporal adverbs, factive verbs, and possessive structures, which collectively contribute to the depth, coherence, and dramatic progression of the plot.

Furthermore, our study shows that, during the process of translation from English into Uzbek, presupposition is subject to transformation due to linguistic, semantic, and cultural distinctions. Some presuppositional signals are preserved directly, retaining their semantic-pragmatic effects, while others are rendered more implicitly or even overtly, reflecting different linguistic norms and contextual preferences. This process can influence the way the target readership interprets suspects' motives, assesses their credibility, and forms judgments about the eventual resolution of the story.

Additionally, we have observed cases where new presuppositional signals are introduced by the translator, adding additional semantic elements to the narrative context. This phenomenon underscores the delicate balance that must be maintained in translation to align semantic fidelity with pragmatic naturalness, ensuring that the target text resonates with its readers while preserving its essential dramatic structure.

Overall, this study contributes to a greater understanding of the role of presupposition in literature and its transformation across linguistic borders. Our findings highlight the necessity for careful semantic-pragmatic consideration in the process of translation, not only for retaining the author's intent but also for preserving the intricate mechanisms through which a narrative guides its readers' understanding. This understanding can aid both linguists and practitioners of translation in developing strategies to produce more accurate, fluent, and contextually appropriate translations of complex literary texts. Furthermore, this study paves the way for future comparative investigations into presupposition across a range of genres, authors, and linguistic pairs, strengthening our understanding of semantic-pragmatic mechanisms in cross-cultural communication.

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