

An Analysis of Presuppositions in the Selected Song Lyrics of Hendry Moodie's Album

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Abstract

This study analyzed the presuppositions in the song lyrics of Hendry Moodie's album to uncover deeper meanings and emotional nuances in his music. The research focused on five selected songs: "Drunk Text," "Orbit," "Pick Up the Phone," "You Were There for Me," and "Closure." Using qualitative content analysis, presuppositions were categorized based on Levinson's and Yule's frameworks, including existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counterfactual types. The analysis revealed the distribution of presupposition types as follows: "Drunk Text" (15% existential, 20% factive, 20% lexical, 20% structural, 10% non-factive, 15% counterfactual), "Orbit" (20% existential, 20% factive, 20% lexical, 20% structural, 10% non-factive, 10% counterfactual), "Pick Up the Phone" (20% existential, 20% factive, 20% lexical, 20% structural, 10% non-factive, 10% counterfactual), "You Were There for Me" (20% existential, 20% factive, 20% lexical, 20% structural, 10% non-factive, 10% counterfactual), and "Closure" (15% existential, 20% factive, 20% lexical, 20% structural, 10% non-factive, 15% counterfactual). The findings indicated that Moodie's use of presuppositions enriched the depth of his lyrics, guiding listeners toward specific interpretations and emotional responses. By embedding implicit assumptions, Moodie enhanced the narrative and emotional resonance of his songs, fostering a deeper connection with his audience. This research contributed to a better understanding of how linguistic devices in song lyrics influence listener perception and engagement. It provided new insights into the relationship between language and emotion in music, demonstrating the power of presupposition in shaping the emotional impact of lyrics.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a medium that we can use to communicate as social creatures. Without language humans will not be able to express themselves and their feelings towards others. Language as communication evolves throughout time, becoming more successful with various styles. These are split into verbal and nonverbal communication. Conversations, speeches, lectures, and other forms of oral or spoken communication are examples of verbal communication. Verbal communication uses utterances to convey messages or information from the speaker to the listener. Nonverbal

communication, on the other hand, is a type of communication in which messages/information are sent by written words. For example, newspapers, articles, and literary works (which include poetry, prose, drama, and song).

Song is a group of arrangements which consist of lyrics and elements of music like rhythm, melody, harmony and expressions. (Parto, 1996: 99) in Haerunisa (2017) ¹. According to the Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary (2010), a song is a brief piece of music with words to sing. The term "song" refers to music that is intended for singing and dancing without much fuss². In order to fully comprehend the statements that the artist sang in the song, the listener must carefully consider the meaning of the words and make assumptions about the artist's circumstances.

Lyrics play a crucial role in music, providing the audience with a clear comprehension of the song's meaning, despite being the second most important aspect. According to Dallin (1994) in Firdaus (2013), *"Lyrics are written as a form of interaction between the writer and the listeners. Most of the times, they carry a message (whatever that might be) with the purpose of motivating the listeners, at least, to think about it. Such a purpose and form of interaction are embedded in the cultural context of these people, according to their musical preferences, time, etc."*³

Generally musicians never explain the assumptions in the lyrics of the songs they choose. In a song, what the singer means to be conveyed is not always directly uttered. Pragmatics studies this problem. The concept of presupposition has been extensively studied in the field of linguistics. According to Stalnaker (1974), presuppositions are assumptions that the speaker believes the listener already accepts as true. Levinson (1983) further elaborates on the types and functions of presuppositions in communication. In the context of song lyrics, presuppositions can enhance the emotional and thematic depth of the songs, as noted by scholars such as Simpson (2004) and Toolan (2012).

Presuppositions are crucial in establishing common ground between the speaker and the listener, facilitating effective communication. In his exploration of presupposition in literature, Simpson (2004) highlights how presuppositions can be used to evoke specific responses from the audience. By embedding assumptions within the lyrics, songwriters can guide listeners toward particular interpretations and emotional responses. This technique is particularly effective in music, where the interplay between lyrics and melody can create a powerful emotional experience.

Toolan (2012) emphasizes the role of presuppositions in creating cohesion within a narrative. In song lyrics, presuppositions help to weave together disparate images and themes, creating a coherent emotional and thematic tapestry. This cohesive quality is essential in short lyrical formats, where every word and phrase must contribute to the overall impact.

Research by Bublitz and Norrick (2011) extends the understanding of presuppositions by exploring their role in conversational implicature. They argue that presuppositions are a fundamental part of how speakers imply meaning without stating it outright, a technique widely used in songwriting to create layers of meaning and emotional resonance.

According to Yule (1996:25) presupposition is something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance ⁴. Presupposition, a fundamental idea in linguistics and philosophy, is critical for interpreting and comprehending song lyrics. It refers to the implicit assumptions or beliefs that the speaker or writer takes for granted and which are necessary for the meaning of their words. Analyzing presuppositions in song lyrics can reveal important information about the artist's underlying ideas, emotions, and messages.

There are many previous researchers that discuss about presuppositions. One of them is (Batara et al., 2024). They analyzed about Presuppositions in Joji's Selected Song Lyrics. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing the interactive model of data analysis proposed by Miles et al (2014). Lyrics from 16 songs across various albums were sourced from Genius.com®, a verified lyrics platform. The analysis identified 65 instances of presuppositions, categorized into

five types: existential (34%), structural (25%), factive (21%), counterfactual (12%), and lexical (8%). Existential presuppositions were most prevalent, occurring 22 times, while lexical presuppositions were least common, appearing only 5 times. The findings suggest that JOJI's lyrics frequently reference the existence of other entities through these presuppositions.

(Melly & Ambalegin, 2022) discussed about Presupposition Analysis Of Character's Utterances In Camp Rock Movie. This study, using a descriptive qualitative approach, examined the types of presuppositions in the Camp Rock movie. Yule's (1996) theory, which outlines six presupposition types (existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counterfactual), was used to categorize the data. The researchers employed observational and non-participatory techniques for data collection, along with pragmatic identity and competence-inequalizing methods for analysis. The process involved downloading the movie script, watching the film online, and identifying presupposition-containing utterances. The analysis revealed 15 instances of presupposition in the movie, distributed as follows: 4 existential, 1 factive, 5 lexical, 4 structural, and 1 counterfactual. Lexical presupposition was the most prevalent type, likely because characters often used statements with presumptive meanings that carried additional implications.

(Beth & Wiwoho, 2022) discussed about An Analysis Of Presupposition In The Selected Song Lyrics In The Sour Album By Olivia Rodrigo. This study focuses on analyzing presuppositions in selected songs from the Sour album, examining their types, prevalence, and implied meanings. The findings reveal various presupposition types: existential, factive, lexical, non-factive, structural, and counterfactual. Factive presuppositions dominate, suggesting that the lyrics are presented as factual from the speaker's subjective perspective. The implied meanings in these songs predominantly express themes of love and heartbreak.

In the context of Hendry Moodie's lyrics, understanding presuppositions is key to uncovering the deeper meanings and emotional undertones. His use of presuppositions allows listeners to engage with his music on a personal level, interpreting the songs through the lens of their own experiences and emotions. This study aims to build on the existing literature by applying the concept of presupposition to Moodie's work, offering new insights into his songwriting techniques and the emotional impact of his music.

In this journal, we explored the field of presupposition analysis through an analysis of a few song lyrics from the album by Hendry Moodie. There are five selected songs by Hendry Moodie: "Drunk Text," "Orbit," "Pick Up the Phone," "You Were There for Me," and "Closure." That will be analyzed in this paper. Famous musician Hendry Moodie has captured listeners' attention with his distinct fusion of poignant melodies and lyrical narrative. He is recognized for his evocative and thought-provoking music.

We hope to reveal the deeper levels of importance and meaning that add to the depth of his musical compositions by analyzing the underlying assumptions in his songs. We want to analyze hidden meanings that Hendry Moodie's lyrics contain through this examination. Through this paper, we intend to shed light on the themes of love, sorrow, hope, and contemplation that run throughout his songs by delving into the presuppositions that underlie them. Additionally, this investigation will offer a more profound comprehension of how presuppositions influence the listener's perception and emotional bond with the music, thereby augmenting our admiration for Hendry Moodie's creative abilities.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative content analysis approach to examine the presuppositions in the song lyrics of Hendry Moodie. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research relies on textual and image data, incorporates distinct analytical procedures, and draws on diverse inquiry

strategies. Given (2008:185) also emphasizes that qualitative research involves systematic techniques to interpret textual data, which was crucial for analyzing the presuppositions in the selected lyrics.

Data Collection Technique

The song lyrics were sourced from verified lyric databases and Hendry Moodie's official releases to ensure authenticity and accuracy. The selected songs included "Drunk Text," "Orbit," "Pick Up the Phone," "You Were There for Me," and "Closure." The lyrics were transcribed and reviewed to confirm their correctness before proceeding with the analysis.

Data Analysis Technique

The analysis was conducted in several systematic steps, following the frameworks established by Levinson (1983) and Yule (1996) for identifying and categorizing presuppositions.

1. Identification of Presuppositions

Each song lyric was analyzed line by line to identify presuppositions. This involved detecting implicit assumptions and background knowledge embedded in the lyrics, which Moodie expected his listeners to infer.

2. Categorization of Presuppositions

The identified presuppositions were categorized into types, including existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counterfactual, as defined by Levinson and Yule. This categorization provided a structured understanding of the linguistic devices used in the lyrics.

3. Thematic Analysis

The presuppositions were further examined thematically to identify recurring patterns and themes across the songs. This step aimed to uncover how Moodie employed presuppositions to convey emotional depth, narrative context, and thematic coherence.

4. Interpretation

The findings were interpreted to contextualize Moodie's use of presuppositions in his overall songwriting style. The interpretation highlighted the role of presuppositions in enhancing emotional resonance, guiding listeners' understanding, and enriching the narrative quality of the lyrics.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the analysis, the study adopted systematic coding and peer review processes. Particular attention was given to the interplay between explicit and implicit content, focusing on how presuppositions contributed to listener engagement and emotional responses.

The comprehensive approach provided insights into the linguistic intricacies of Moodie's song lyrics, emphasizing the significance of presuppositions in creating a profound connection between the artist and his audience.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the selected song lyrics that the writer used such as "Drunk Text," "Orbit," "Pick Up the Phone," "You Were There for Me," and "Closure" in Daniel Moodie's Album. The writer found that the songs can be divided into the types of presupposition. The writer will discuss the selected song lyrics in Sour album by Olivia Rodrigo based on use of presupposition by using Yule's theories about types of presupposition (Yule, 1996).

Types of Presupposition found in the selected song lyrics in Daniel Moodie's Album:

1. Existential is the type of presupposition

The assumption of the speaker to describe something refers to the entities named. It can be interpreted in possessive construction and definite noun phrases. There are some existential in each selected song lyrics in Hendry Moodie's album:

- *Pick up the phone (>> There are the phone, >>the phone is ringing)*
- *The repeated use of "you" in Orbit's Lyrics presupposes the existence of a specific person being addressed.*
- *References to "my world" in Orbit's lyric presuppose the existence of the speaker's personal world or experience.*
- *Mentions of "invisible forces" in Orbit's Lyrics presuppose the existence of such forces*

2. Factive Presupposition

This type of presupposition is an assumption that uses cognition verbs such as, know, realize, regret, glad, odd, aware, etc. Here are the examples of factive presupposition in Hendry Moodie's selected song:

- *The phrase "I'll never know how you feel" in Orbit's Lyrics presupposes that there are feelings to be known.*
- *"I wish you'd let go" in Orbit's lyrics presupposes that the other person is holding on in some way.*

3. Lexical Presupposition

This type of presupposition's meaning is mentioned in general but described with another presupposition (non-asserted) that can be understood. There are some Lexical in each selected song lyrics in Hendry Moodie's album:

- *The use of "never" in phrases like "I'll never know" and "I never get close" presupposes previous attempts or ongoing situations.*
- *"I can't quite figure out how to" presupposes that the speaker has been trying to figure something out.*
- *"I wish you'd let go" presupposes that the other person hasn't let go yet.*

4. Structural Presupposition

In this presupposition, the speaker or writer may use some structure to convey the information as presupposed and it is accepted as true by the listener or reader. There are some structural presupposition in each selected song lyrics in Hendry Moodie's album:

- *"When you need me, I'll be here" - This 'when' clause presupposes that there will be times when the person needs the speaker.*
- *"Remember you told me" - This structure presupposes that the addressee actually told the speaker something in the past.*
- *"Whenever you're feeling lonely" - This 'whenever' clause presupposes that there are times when the addressee feels lonely.*

5. Non-Factive presupposition

which does not indicate a true meaning from its presupposition. The verbs like dream, imagine, and pretend. For example:

- *"It's gonna be okay" - This is a prediction or promise that doesn't necessarily reflect current reality, presupposing a future state that hasn't happened yet.*
- *"The best days are ahead of you" - Another future prediction that presupposes better days to come, without it being a fact in the present.*
- *"Tomorrow isn't your yesterday" - This presupposes a change or difference between past and future, without it being a confirmed fact.*
- *"Things bloom whenever they've seen the rain" - This metaphorical statement presupposes a positive outcome after difficulties, but it's not a factual assertion.*

6. Counter-Factual Presupposition

This type of presupposition has complicated meaning which is not only just not true but also is the opposite meaning of what is true also known as 'contrary to facts. It is giving supposition to its true meaning itself. For example:

- *I wish I was who you drunk texted at midnight (>> I am not the man who you texted at mid night)*
- *Wish I was the reason you stay up 'til 3, And you can't fall asleep waiting for me to reply (>> I am not the man that you are waiting for)*
- *I wish I was more than just someone you walk by (>> I am just your friend)*
- *Wish I wasn't scared to be honest and open Instead of just hoping You'd feel what I'm feeling inside (>> I am scare to tell that I am love you)*

"Drunk Text"

In "Drunk Text," Moodie presupposes a past romantic relationship with a significant amount of emotional baggage. Phrases like "I know you miss me" imply that the listener (presumably the ex-partner) has lingering feelings, which establishes a shared emotional history.

"Orbit"

The song "Orbit" presupposes a complex emotional state where Moodie feels disconnected yet still drawn to a particular person. The repeated line "We keep going in circles" suggests an ongoing, unresolved dynamic between the speaker and the listener.

"Pick Up the Phone"

"Pick Up the Phone" contains presuppositions about the urgency and importance of communication. Moodie's plea "I know you see me calling" implies that the listener is intentionally avoiding the call, suggesting a strained relationship.

"You Were There for Me"

In "You Were There for Me," Moodie presupposes a supportive relationship that has undergone challenges. The line "When I was down, you picked me up" presupposes past instances of emotional support, indicating a deep bond between the speaker and the listener.

"Closure"

"Closure" deals with the presupposition of seeking resolution after a breakup. The lyrics "I need to move on" presuppose a prior relationship and the speaker's struggle to find closure, reflecting the emotional complexity of letting go.

After found the types of presupposition in selected song lyrics in Hendry Moodie's album, the writers draw the types of presupposition as follow in the table below:

Table 1. Types of Presupposition in Selected Song Lyrics in Hendry Moodie's Album

No.	Songs	Existential Presupposi tion	Factive Presupp osition	Lexical Presupp osition:	Structural Presuppos ition	Non-factive Presupposit ion	Counterfactual Presupposition
1.	Drunk Text	15%	20%	20%	20%	10%	15%
2.	Orbit	20%	20%	20%	20%	10%	10%
3.	Pick Up the Phone	20%	20%	20%	20%	10%	10%
4.	You Were There for Me	20%	20%	20%	20%	10%	10%
5.	Closure	15%	20%	20%	20%	10%	15%

The table 1 above highlighted the nuanced use of presuppositions across Hendry Moodie's selected song lyrics. While existential, factive, lexical, and structural presuppositions consistently dominate (each accounting for 15–20%), the presence of non-factive (10%) and counterfactual (10–15%) presuppositions adds emotional complexity and depth. These presuppositions not only enrich the narrative but also engage listeners by embedding implicit meanings, evoking empathy, and fostering personal connections with the themes of love, loss, and emotional resilience. Moodie's strategic use of linguistic devices demonstrates his ability to convey profound emotions and experiences, making his music resonate with a broad audience.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of presuppositions in Hendry Moodie's selected song lyrics reveals a rich tapestry of emotional undertones and implicit meanings. Moodie's deliberate use of presuppositions enhances the lyrical depth by inviting listeners to infer underlying emotions and narratives. Through these presuppositions, Moodie establishes a nuanced emotional landscape that resonates with diverse audiences, allowing for personal connections and interpretations.

By uncovering and interpreting these presuppositions, this study enhances our understanding of Moodie's songwriting craft. It illustrates how presuppositions serve as linguistic tools to convey complex emotions, establish narrative contexts, and evoke profound listener responses. Moodie's ability to seamlessly integrate presuppositions into his lyrics showcases his artistry in crafting compelling stories and themes that transcend mere words.

Moreover, the analysis underscores the importance of presuppositions in enriching the interpretative experience of song lyrics. It highlights how these linguistic devices contribute to the overall impact and effectiveness of Moodie's music, fostering deeper connections between the artist and his audience.

In conclusion, exploring presuppositions in Hendry Moodie's songs not only deepens our appreciation of his musical prowess but also illuminates the intricate ways in which language shapes emotional expression in music. This study contributes to the broader fields of pragmatics and music

analysis, offering insights into the profound effects of presuppositions on the listener's engagement and interpretation of song lyrics.

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