Presupposition Making as Truth Seeking Technique: A Pragmatic Approach to Investigation Discourse

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استخدام الافتراض المسبق كتقنية بحث عن الحقيقة: مقاربة تداولية لخطاب التحقيق

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(1)

Abstract

The present paper aims at exploring the strategic use of presupposition in investigation discourses, and how investigators make favorable effects and avoid unfavorable ones by means of this linguistic phenomenon. Generally speaking, there are 3 main approaches to the notion of presupposition; namely sentence presupposition, utterance presupposition and speaker's presupposition. Each approach takes certain linguistic view as point of departure. The speaker sometimes presupposed new information that the addressee has to accommodate to the common ground. Accommodation is defined as kind of repair strategy by which the addressee accepts to modify his/her beliefs in order to prevent a sentence from resulting in a presupposition failure.

The paper shows that the use of presupposition is an important investigation technique. It may have three basic uses; it can help to tell the story, it can introduce new items of information and it can help to test suspect's credibility.

Keywords: (Presupposition; Accommodation; Pragmatics; Investigation Discourse)

الخلاصة

. يهدف هذا البحث الى استكشاف كيفية استخدام ظاهرة الافتراض المسبق للحصول على النتائج المرجوة واستبعاد غير المرغوب منها اثناء التحقيق. بشكل عام هناك 3 مقاربات اساسية لمفهوم الافتراض المسبق وهي افتراض مسبق خاص بالجملة، افتراض مسبق خاص بالمقولة وافتراض مسبق خاص بالمتكلم. كل مقاربة من هذه المقاربات تتخذ وجهة نظر لغوية مختلفة اساسا فيها. ان المتكلم في بعض الاحيان يفترض بعض القضايا التي على المستمع ان يعدلها ويقبلها كجزء من مشتركات السياق. لذا فان التعديل والقبول هي استراتيجية تقويمية يعتمدها المستمع لتجنب فشل الافتراض المسبق بينهما.

تبين نتائج البحث اهمية استخدام الافتراض المسبق في الخطاب اللغوي في التحقيقات وذلك لان له ثلاثة استخدامات رئيسية. فالافتراض المسبق يمكن ان يستخدم للاخبار بحدث معين، ويمكن ايضا ان يستخدم لعرض معلومة جديدة.

الكلمات الدلالية: (الافتراض المسبق؛ التعديل والقبول؛ علم اللغة التداولي؛ خطاب التحقيق)

1. Introduction

Linguistics has increasingly become an important area of scientific inquiry in many fields of life, since linguistic researches have made significant contributions to disciplines including law enforcement investigation techniques. Police investigators are usually trained to master different linguistic-based techniques to help them elicit information from their suspects. One of these techniques is the use of utterances loaded with certain types of indirect information to collate the information provided by the suspects in the different stages of the investigation with the information already available to the investigators through other means. This is done through the use of utterances that presuppose certain information. Since, Presupposition is a necessary precondition for the processing of any communication; it is often used in investigation discourses to convey ideas indirectly rather than asserting them directly and to deceive the suspect under investigation in order to elicit more information.

The present paper aims at exploring the strategic use of very well-known pragmatic phenomenon, i.e. presupposition, and how investigators make favorable effects and avoid unfavorable ones. By intentionally load their utterances with controversial propositions conveyed implicitly in terms of presuppositions, competent investigators manage to direct the course of the investigation the way they want to through making linguistic traps and favorable effects for themselves. Given the confrontational and goal-oriented features of investigation discourse, it is beneficial to provide an account for investigation from a pragmatic perspective, since this strategic use of laden presuppositions in investigation discourse strengthens the argument provided by scholars that describe and explain the phenomenon of presupposition in terms of pragmatic approaches.

2. Presupposition as Pragmatic Phenomenon

The Presuppositionality is a general property of language use, and presupposition is defined as this implicit claim inherent in the explicit meaning of the utterance and is usually taken for granted (Richardson, 2007:63). Finch, (2000:165) points out that presupposition can be used as a linguistic economy strategy, because if a speaker had to spell out all the details every time s/he speaks, then communication would be an

extremely lengthy and tedious. Being able to assume a certain amount of knowledge on the part of the addressee makes it possible to take shortcuts. Moreover, Finch (ibid.) argues that the degree of shortcutting, however, depends on the context in which the communication takes place. By the same token, Verschueren (2002:26) highlights the impossibility of complete directness arguing that no matter how explicit and direct the speaker aims to be, there must be some background information to help develop common ground, which is conveyed to the addressee by different means including presupposition.

The notion of presupposition has relatively long history in linguistics, philosophy of language, and logic. Fredge (1952) in his "On Sense and Reference" first produces the notion of presupposition when discussing the referring expressions and how they presuppose the existence of their referents. Russell (cited in Levinson, 1997: 169-172), on the other hand, attempts to provide an explanation to the notion of presupposition in his account of logic in the beginning of the 20th centry. Palmer (1988: 166-167) indicates that Strawson developed an account for presupposition and brought it to the linguistic fore in the 1960s. Simsons (2007: 10-15) shows that different scholars defined he concept of presupposition according to their interest in the linguistic inquiry, therefore some defined it as a semantic phenomenon and others as a pragmatic one. Semantic presupposition refers to propositions that the addressee assumes to be true in order to be able to assign truth value to the sentence; otherwise the truth value of the sentence will be indeterminable. Semantic theories encounter numerous difficulties, as they fail to provide an adequate description to the phenomenon of presupposition in relevance to the role of speaker's intention. Many of the semantic theories do not even incorporate any notion of accommodation, which is vital to cope with the shortcoming encountered by traditional theories of presupposition (Beaver, 2008:2).

Pragmatic presupposition, on the other hand, refers to proposition that the speaker takes its truth value for granted upon performing her/his speech act. Finch (2000: 166) uses the following example to explain how pragmatic presupposition arises in communication;

 A. She tripped before getting in the car.
 B. She died before getting in the car.

C. She got in the car.

Finch (ibid.) points out that C is presupposed by A but not by B. He maintains that this is because that one knows that when someone dies s/he cannot get in a car. Therefore, as Simons (2002:3) puts it, presupposition includes information about the knowledge, beliefs, ideology and scale of values that the addressee must be acquainted with in order to understand the meaning of an utterance. It is now well-known in the linguistic circles that the pragmatic approach of presupposition is the most accepted in linguistics, even though the semantic approach is strongly entrenched and possesses longer history (Levinson: 1997: 199-204, Stalnaker:1998, Finch, 2000:165, Yule, 2000: 25-26, Simon, 2002:3).

Generally, it seems that there are 3 main definitions to the notion of presupposition; namely sentence presupposition, utterance presupposition and speaker's presupposition. Each type takes certain linguistic view as point of departure. Simons (2007: 1) indicates that there are interesting and theoretically relevant distinctions to be made between different types of presuppositions within a large heterogeneous set. But the study of these distinctions is of interest, because intuitively the members of this set share some common features, that is to say, there is some singular phenomenon of presupposition to be described and explained. Simons (2007: 9-14) perfectly presents the differences among the three types of presuppositions by producing 3 different definitions. He defines sentence presupposition as "a sentence *S* presupposes *p* iff *p* is standardly a presupposition of cooperative utterances of *U*." He (ibid: 14) maintains that "standardly" is used in this definition to allow for the fact that "very few so-called presuppositional sentences are invariably so". Sentence presupposition seems to be deep-rooted in linguistics and logic and it is usually linked to the notion of entailment. It is defined as the implicit assumption that helps assign truth value to the sentence (Levinson, 1997: 172-7). The semantic approaches to presupposition fail to account for many times of linguistic phenomenon that can be subsumed under the notion of presupposition. On the other hand, Simons (2007:13-4) asserts that a proposition is a presupposition of an utterance *U* iff:

(i) the interpreter must take the speaker to accept *p* in order to make sense of *U* and

(ii) the reason for (i) is not merely that the speaker has demonstrated a communicative intention with respect to *p*

According to this view, it is utterances rather than speakers or sentences which are the primary bearers of presuppositions, and based on which the derivative notions of speaker presupposition and sentence presupposition can be defined (ibid.). Stalnaker (1972, as cited in Atlas, 2007:34) seconds this view, as he indicates that "any semantic presupposition of proposition expressed in a given context will be a pragmatic presupposition of the people in that context".

Nevertheless, Simons (ibid: 14) states that a speaker "*S* presupposes a proposition *P* in uttering *U* iff *S* intends *U* to have an interpretation which is fully cooperative only given her acceptance of *P*". This definition of speaker presupposition seems to be utterance-relative, since it necessitates that the speaker *S* intends his utterance *U* to be interpreted in a certain way. Simons (ibid.) argues that one can of course talk about what a speaker presupposes in a more general sense, as the propositions that a speaker accepts, or even that s/he believes to be common ground. Yet, the utterance-relative notion is the one which is relevant to the phenomenon whereby addressees gain information about their interlocutors' acceptances in a systematic fashion.

Generally, presupposition in pragmatics is attributed to the speaker not to the sentence or to its utterance. Simons (2002:3) argues that pragmatic view, including the widely accepted one of Stalnaker, takes the presuppositions of a sentence to be those propositions which must be presupposed by the speaker of the sentence in order for the sentence to be appropriately used and assigned truth value. As such, even the typical cases of semantic presupposition, e.g. referential presuppositions, are perceived as pragmatic presuppositions since they are linked to the speaker beliefs and attitudes. Moreover, Stalnaker (1972: 388) argues that:

> A proposition *P* is a pragmatic presupposition of a
> speaker in a given context just in case the speaker
> assumes or believes that *P*, assumes or believes
> that his addressee recognizes that he is making
> these assumptions, or has these beliefs.

Simons (2007:2) points out that definition of speaker presupposition, as proposed by Stalnaker has undergone a number of revisions in the course of his work. In the same vein, Yule (2000:25) states that a presupposition is something that the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making the utterance. Therefore, it is the speaker, not sentences, that has presupposition. yet, Simons (2002:9) emphasizing the strong connection between presupposition and the addressee, he maintains that the presuppositions of an utterance are the propositions which the addressee must accept in order for the utterance to be relevant for him/her in the way intended by the speaker.

3. Presupposition, Common Ground and Accommodation

The concept of common ground is a pivotal concept in the definition of the Pragmatic Presupposition. Many scholars, including Stalnaker (1972), define presupposition as a proposition that the addressee takes for granted to be part of the common ground in order to interpret the utterance produced by the speaker. Nonetheless, Karttunen (1973) and Atlas (2007:34) notice a shortcoming in this account of presupposition, Karttunen (1973, as cited in Atlas, 20007:34) points out that counterfactual conditional sentences such as "*If Bill had a dime, he would buy you a Coke*" is often uttered in some contexts in which the speaker does not assume that his/her interlocutors assume that Bill does not have a dime, which is one of the semantic presupposition of this utterance. Yet, according to Stalnaker's account this is not one of the pragmatic presuppositions of the utterance. Even though, in the very same account, it is made very clear that "any semantic presupposition of proposition expressed in a given context will be a pragmatic presupposition of the people in that context" (Stalnaker 1972: 441). In the same vein, Atlas (1975: 37) asserts that the concept of common background knowledge encounters some difficulties when tested against some speech situations, which weakens Stalnaker's original claim.
To overcome this difficulty, Lewis (1979: 340 as cited in Atlas, 2007:34) presents the concept of accommodation which is produced as kind of repair strategy by which the addressee accepts to modify his/her beliefs in order to prevent a sentence from resulting in a presupposition failure. The principle of accommodation states that "if at a time t something is said that requires a presupposition p to be acceptable and if p is not proposed

just before *t*, then –ceteris paribus and within certain limit- presupposition *p* comes into existence at *t*" (Ibid.).

Asudeh (2008:4-5) states that presuppositions are generally required to be conceived of as part of the common ground or shared assumptions between the interlocutors. Nonetheless, in certain contexts a "presupposition can be accommodated or backgrounded, i.e. added to the common ground, even if it is new information".

Asudeh (Ibid.) argues that if one supposes the addressee of the utterance of "*The King of Buganda is in town*" has no idea where Buganda is or whether it has a monarchy, then based on the general Gricean assumption that the speaker is being truthful, the addressee will then accommodate the presupposition that there is a King of Buganda. She (2008:5.) intuitively argues that the addressee will not accommodate a presupposition that conflicts with his or her background knowledge unless the knowledge is shaky. She cites as an example the utterance of "*The King of France is in town*" which would not be accommodated by most informed, competent adult addressees. Nevertheless, she (ibid.) maintains that presuppositions that conflict with addressees' background knowledge would be accommodated if the speaker of the utterance is considered authoritative. Similarly, Van Dijk (2000:10) underscores that critical discourse analysts focus on those propositions that suggest that some propositions are (accepted to be) true, but in fact they are not true at all, or at least controversial. Thus, he (ibid.) maintains that, "if police or media report that energetic action is being undertaken against the "*rising crime among minorities*", such an expression may falsely presuppose (or indirectly assert) that the crime rate among minorities is indeed rising".

As shown by Asudeh (2008: 4-5), cited above, presuppositions constitute constraints on the common ground, or on an interlocutor's perception of the common ground, at the point at which the presupposing utterance is interpreted, because presupposition, according to Stalnaker (1979) and Asudeh (2008), define the common ground and that allow the interlocutors to reach unstated agreement on certain sets of information that help facilitate the interaction between them.

However, some scholars, including Abbott (2000), provide another account, and the motivation for seeking a new account comes in part from the same considerations cited by Abbott (2000, 1422), in her critique of the standard view. Abbott's central point is that the driving idea behind the common ground view is that presuppositions are identified with "old" information, or information that the speaker is treating as "old. However, this is not always case, since the interlocutors need sometimes to accommodate some new information and treat it as old, according to the

Principle of Accommodation, as show above. Accommodation is, then, seen as a strategy for informativeness that is communicated indirectly via sentence presupposition, which, in the traditional Stalnakeraan view, is dependent on speaker presupposition. Stalnaker in his later works (1979:449) maintains that the speaker does not really need be assuming that his/her audience recognizes in advance that s/he is taking something for granted. In some cases, he maintains, the central purpose of making a statement may be to communicate a presupposition which is required by that statement. Stalnaker (1979:449), as cited in Simsons (2002:13), adds that in such cases, the speaker represents herself/himself as assuming that certain propositions are part of the background of common knowledge and that "this representation is a transparent pretense, but it is nevertheless by means of the representation that communication is accomplished" (ibid.).

The concepts of accommodation and of informative presupposition, though concerned with similar phenomenon, seem to provide different description to it. Simons (2003:12) points out that the concept of accommodation is envisaged differently by Lewis (1979) and Stalanker (1979), he adds that the process envisaged by Stalnaker is somewhat different from Lewis's view of accommodation since Lewis was explicitly concerned with a process that rescues an utterance from inappropriateness by providing a "required presupposition." Simons (ibid.:12) points out that:

> Lewis was explicitly concerned with a process that rescues an utterance from inappropriateness by providing a "required presupposition." In this process, the conversational score—which is a property of the conversation, not of each individual speaker— undergoes a change to ensure the appropriateness of the utterance. But as envisaged by Stalnaker, accommodation is not a process of "context-fixing" driven by the presuppositional requirements of utterances. It is rather a matter of discourse participants cooperatively trying to match their presuppositions to the presuppositions of others

Scholars including, Thomason's (1990) and Simons (2007), maintain that presupposition accommodation involves some kind of cooperation between the interlocutors; they both argue that accommodation does not only involve coping with obstacles which may encounter interlocutors in interaction, but it also involves recognizing the speaker's intention which

entails that the addressee has to accept some presuppositions in order to know which speech act is being performed and to interpret the illocutionary force. Simsons (2007:15) aptly links cooperation and presupposition identification, arguing that an interpreter may need to attribute to a speaker certain assumptions in the absence of which the utterance cannot be assigned a cooperative interpretation. To provide an explanation for accommodation, Stalnaker (1979: 431) uses the some examples. He (ibid.) states that in an utterance produced by Alice to Bob such as "*I have to pick up my sister at the airport*" , Bob first observes that Alice has said something which is appropriate only if she believes that it is, or shortly will be, common ground that she has a sister. Stalnaker (ibid.) states that, from this, Bob infers that Alice takes for granted that she has a sister. As Bob takes Alice to be cooperative and truthful, according to Grice's cooperative Principle, with respect to this proposition, he himself takes on this belief. As this implicit exchange of beliefs is transparent, the fact of Alice's having a sister indeed does become common ground.

Simons (2007: 16) argues that the central step in Stalnaker's example "was Bob's recognition of Alice having a (first order) belief about having a sister; the (second order) belief about the (potential) common ground has no direct role in the process of Bob's belief change". Therefore, he defines accommodation as "a matter of discourse participants coordinating their first order beliefs. Changes to second order beliefs about the common ground are a consequence of this first order coordination" (ibid).

Motivated by the Principle of Accommodation, one is urged to envisage presupposition as a common belief, or common ground, which is a cooperatively presented proposition that is accommodated by the interlocutors, rather than common knowledge that represents a fixed epistemic state of affairs. This is because presupposed propositions do not always need to be true in order for the utterance to be accepted and interpreted. Yet, if envisaged as common knowledge, discourse can be based on an assumption that later, as the discourse unfolds, turns out to be false. So, it seems that presupposition should be associated with common belief rather than common knowledge (ibid:4).Basically, as Simons, (2007:15) puts it, presupposition acceptance requires the speaker's commitments to his/her own presupposition and also requires the addressee to accommodate his/her perception on the common beliefs in the interaction. This argument is strongly entrenched in the notion of context adopted in the Relevance Theory framework. Sperbe and Wilson (2007: 611) emphasize that context is the cooperative and relevant

interaction between interlocutors in the interaction, and it is mainly the interpreter's recreation of the context, based on linguistics evidence provided by the speaker, what matters in utterance interpretation. Furthermore, the Principle of Accommodation gives superiority to the interpreter when it comes to presupposition recognition which is basically based on linguistic evidence provided by the speaker in the interaction, and this fits perfectly well with the major trend Relevance theory is based on, which is the significant role of the interpreter in utterance comprehension.

4. Presupposition, Presupposition Making and Relevance

As discussed in section No. **2**, Stalnaker (1972: 388) explains linguistic presupposition in terms of what speakers normally implicitly propose by their use of these sentences. Such definition of presupposition, thus, defines presupposition as primarily a propositional attitude attributed to the speaker. Van Rooy (2007, 2) highlights the relation between the interlocutors' attitude and presupposition. He (ibid.) points out "If by means of this relation, together with the assumption that the agent is rational, one can explain the behavior of the agent". He (ibid) maintains that presupposition should be perceived as a common belief rather than common knowledge, because the addressee may need to presuppose some new information even though is not part of the common knowledge, this is of course motivated by the Principle of Accommodation, as explained in the previous section.

Likewise, Simons (2003:16) asserts that

> [T]he central step in Stalnaker's argument is the hearer's recognition of the speaker having a (first order) belief about having presupposed proposition; the (second order) belief about the (potential) common ground has no direct role in the process of the hearer's belief change.

Stalnaker (1973: 451) highlights an important relation between sentence presupposition and speaker presupposition; given superiority to speaker presupposition. He (ibid.) maintains that to utter a presupposing sentence is to presuppose its presupposition. It should be noted that if, in a normal context, the speaker acts as if s/he takes the truth of the presupposition expressed by his/her utterance for granted. Simons (2003: 16) aptly indicates that "the idea seems to be that the utterance of a presupposing sentence brings the (speaker) presupposition into being".

In his discussion of accommodation, and in accordance with Van Rooy (2007), Simons (2003: 16-17), develops Stalnaker's account by producing the notion of informative presupposition, which he defines as:

> The one in which a speaker utters a presupposing sentence knowing full well that the presuppositions of the sentence are not in the common ground. As Stalnaker has observed from the first, such utterances may be entirely appropriate, and may lead to a perfectly natural process of accommodation. Such uses of presupposing sentences, we will call informative presuppositions.

He (ibid. 17-20) argues that, in some contexts, the speaker needs to presuppose certain proposition; s/he acts as if this proposition is already part of the common ground, by virtue of accommodation, and the addressee will accept the presupposed proposition. Surely, the speaker jeopardizes, if controversial, that presupposed proposition may face presupposition failure. Indeed, informative presuppositions don't seem to present any difficulties for the dispositional account of presupposition when coupled with accommodation, (ibid: 17). Such argument makes a clear distinction between presupposition and making presupposition, which seems to involve some type of pretense. Making presupposition is an intentionally production of pretended presupposition loaded with new information conveyed indirectly and implicitly to the addressee. It seems that investigators, in their attempt to verify information and /or elicit new information, employ informative presupposition in different ways to get the person under investigation to take certain proposition for granted.

In following extract taken from the US well-known investigation of the Lacresha Murray, who was convicted of murdering her 2-year old sister, the investigator managed to use an informative presupposition to get the suspect to provide new information.

- Officer 2: Your cousin, what's his, what's your cousin's name?
- Lacresha Murray: Hm? Trey.
- Officer 2: Trey, and he came to the house by himself, or with some other people?
- Lacresha Murray: With his, he walked half way. His momma dropped him off.

Apparently, the investigator, presupposing that Lacresha Murray's cousin came home, and Lacresha Murray accepted the presupposition of the

officer's utterance for granted. By means of this presupposition the officer managed to get the suspect to tell him who was with her in the house at the time which the officer believes the murder took place.

In the case of informative presupposition, the new information implicitly conveyed needs to be relevant for the addressee in order to have him/her accept the presupposed proposition and to be able to interpret the utterance as intended by the addresser. As such, relevance theory has its bearing on the notion of informative presupposition and the process of accommodation in general. As shown by Carston (2007:15) Implicatures are classified into two types in relevance theory, namely: implicated premises and implicated conclusions. She (ibid.) defines implicated premises as "a subset of the contextual assumptions used in processing the utterance and implicated conclusions as a subset of its contextual implications". What distinguishes these subsets from other contextual assumptions and implications is that they are intentionally communicated, and as such part of the intended interpretation of the utterance. Sperber and Wilson highlight the importance of presuppositions, i.e., implicated premises in relevance framework terminology, as they (1986:204-208) maintain that comprehension is an ongoing process where implicated premises play central role. The hypotheses at the three main levels of the utterance comprehension process in relevance theory, i.e. explicatures, implicated premises and implicated conclusions, are developed in parallel against a background of expectations, which may be revised or elaborated as the utterance unfolds. The addressee, in his pursuit of relevance, will interpret the utterance taking the presupposed proposition, i.e. the implicated premises, for granted in order to infer the implicated proposition, i.e. implicated conclusion in relevance framework terminology. The principle of accommodation as described above explains how the addressee accepts these implicated premises. Simons (2002:9), though, emphasizing their relevance to the addressee, maintains that the presuppositions of an utterance are the propositions which the addressee must accept in order for the utterance to be relevant for him/her in the way intended by the speaker. Simons (ibid:5) argues that for Sperber and Wilson, relevance is a matter of how well and productively some input interacts with existing salient assumptions of the addressee. An utterance is relevant in a context just in case it has some contextual effects in that context. A context is here conceived of as a set of propositions, a subset of an individual's assumptions about the text and setting.

5. Properties of Interrogation Discourse

Interrogation is a type of interview that has its own characteristics. The simplest definition of 'interview' is that "it is a conversation with a deliberate purpose that the participants accept", (Kadution & Kadution, 1997: 4). However, interrogation is defined by Borum (1991: 28) as a special type of interview where formal questions are asked by authorized person to obtain the truth through planned or unplanned approaches and techniques.

Walton (2003: 1773) points out that interrogation is an information-seeking type of interaction. He (ibid.) maintains that

> This type of interaction can take various special forms. One is the journalistic interview, for example, of the kind typified by a televised interview of a celebrity. Another is clinical questioning in medicine. Yet another is the kind of computerized search of a data base for information on a specific topic that we are now all so familiar with. In all of these types of interaction, the goal of the proponent is to get some information that the respondent presumably has. The respondent's purpose is to cooperate by giving whatever information s/he can prudently provide, given her/his circumstances. The goal of the dialogue as a whole is for this transfer of information to take place.

Yet, Walton distinguishes between interrogation and other types of information seeking interactions; he (ibid.) admits that the interrogation would seem to be a species of information-seeking interaction, but it, he emphasizes, seems to contain elements of some of the other types of interaction as well. As highlighted by Williams (2000: 212), interrogation frequently involves negotiation. For example, bargaining is a common aspect of police interrogations. Interrogation also may involve persuasion, or even seem to consist of persuasion of the suspect to make a confession. Unlike other types of information-seeking types of interaction, interrogation mainly aims at transferring information in one direction only, which is from the suspect to the interrogator. Along the same lines, Walton (2003:1776-7) points out that interrogation discourse is essentially an asymmetrical type of interaction, i.e., "the goals and methods of argumentation used by the one side are quite different from those on the other side". The goal of the interrogator is to get any kind of

information out of the suspect that is needed for some purpose, like taking action to prevent harm, or pursuing an investigation. The goal of the suspect is to pursue her/his own interests and goals, as s/he sees them, balancing them against the wider needs and interests of the community. It is up to her/him to decide whether his interests are best served by giving out information or by withholding it.

Apparently, the mainly one-way direction of information flow is due to the asymmetrical power relation in the interrogation discourse, since the interrogator processes coercive power, which he acquires by means of his profession, Cf. (Spencer-Oatey,1992, cited in Thomas, 1995: 126). Therefore, Walton (2003:1798) alludes that the interrogation represents a type of interaction in which the one party is restricted respond, as s/he is a supplier of information, and his/her part in the dialogue consists of simply giving answers to questions posed by the other party, who is in a more powerful position. Nonetheless, Walton (2003:1779-80) asserts that even though interrogation is a type of interaction that does not depend on the agreement of the participants in the way the other types of interaction do, but it sometimes tends to shift into deliberation and negotiation, and to be based on embedding into these other types of interaction. Thus, the goal of an interrogation is not just to get information, but to get it for some prior purpose or use. Walton's observation makes it very clear that cooperative linguistic behavior is not always considered the rule in interrogation, it rarely is, and as such, it is necessary for the interrogator to adopt unusual techniques to elicit information such as getting the suspect to accept certain presupposition in an attempt to get more information or to collate the information available with the one provided by the suspect in the investigation.

6. Presupposition Making in Interrogation Discourse

Since linguistic communication with the suspects is one of the main means to get more information on crime under investigation, and investigation discourse is the main information source available to the interrogator. Interrogators often make use of some properties of language and/or linguistic phenomenon to develop certain investigation techniques, one of these linguistic phenomena is presupposition.

As explained in the previous section, interrogation is a goal-oriented type of interaction, where the interrogator aims to elicit information from the suspect. Davis and Leo (2010: 11-12) state that during the earliest stage of the interrogation, the interrogator attempts to undermine resistance of the suspect and to effectively persuade her/him to confess by communicating five crucial messages to the suspect:

They (ibid) argue that these messages are:

> "(1) 'I know you're guilty; your guilt has been established beyond any doubt;' (2) 'Nevertheless, there may be a resolution that doesn't involve serious consequences;' (3) 'I have the authority to affect what happens to you;' (4) 'I like you and want to try to help you;' and (5) 'I can't help you unless you explain what happened, now, before we finish here.

These messages serve to define the nature and goal of the interaction, the roles of the interlocutors, and the motivations for carrying it out (ibid). Kleinman (1991:119) asserts that one of the investigation tactics is the "Alternative Question Methodology", which is frequently employed in law enforcement interrogations to present the suspect with an "acceptable rationalization for yielding", that is to say offering an attractive option other than outright confession to the crime, the alternative question allows the suspect to "save face" by agreeing with the interrogator's characterization of the criminal behavior as inherently positive in intent or objective. An alternative question is a question that presents two or more possible answers and presupposes that only one is true. This technique is obviously based on urging the suspect to accommodate certain presuppositions to be part of the common ground, which is a typical pragmatic process best described as informative presupposition as explained by Simons (2003:17). Kleinman (ibid.) recited a good example of an alternative question;

> Did you start the fire at your company because you wanted to hurt people or as a way of calling attention to the fact that your contributions to the company have been consistently ignored for many years and you felt you had no other options available to you?

Regardless of how the suspect responds, there is an admission of guilt, because the suspect accepted the presupposition "*you started the fire*". The same technique is used in most modern investigations. See the following extract from Lacresha Murray investigation, who was accused of killing her younger sister. This case garnered a wide national coverage in the United States of America in the last Decade:

- Officer: And how long were you gone?
- Lacresha Murray: I don't know.

- Officer: Did you all go to the store before Shawntay went to work? Or afterwards?
- Lacresha Murray: Before.
- Officer: Before. You all were gone already and when you came back, was Shawntay still there or had she gone to work?
- Lacresha Murray: I think she was gone.
- Officer: She had already gone to work? Okay. And, how do you know what time she went to work?

As the investigation continues, the officer uses the alternative question technique, i.e. informative presupposition, to implicitly provide new information to the suspect, when the suspect accepted the information as part of the common ground, then the investigator could collate this accepted presupposition with the information provided by Lacresha Murray at different point of the investigation. He manages make his presupposition relevant to and accepted by the suspect. As such, via her recognition of relevance and acceptance of the presupposition, she admits that she went back home. The investigator, by means of the very same informative presupposition, attempts to test the Lacresha Murray's credibility, which he finds shaky because she would not know when Shawntay had come back home if the suspect arrived before Shawntay left home. This is very evident in the weak answers the suspect provided as the investigation continues:

- Officer: She had already gone to work? Okay. And, how do you know what time she went to work?
- Lacresha Murray: Hm?
- Officer: How did you know what time she went to work?
- Lacresha Murray: Because she told, she has a schedule in her room.
- Officer: And she normally goes to work at that time?
- Lacresha Murray: Uh, uh. [Negative.] She's got different schedules and stuff, hours.
- Officer: So did you check the schedule that day, or how did you know?
- Lacresha Murray: My grandpa told me. And I happen to know what time she goes to work.
- Officer: Okay. Did you ask your poppa or had he just told you?
- Lacresha Murray: Hm?
- Officer: Did you ask him?

- Lacresha Murray: No he was telling people at the hospital that I heard.

The investigator continues to use the same technique to test the credibility of the suspect and to get her tell the truth:

- Officer: Well, I thought you were in your bedroom, playing ball.
- Lacresha Murray: I was.
- Officer: But you just told me you came out of the bathroom.
- Lacresha Murray: I did come out of the bathroom!
- Officer: Were you in the bedroom or in the bathroom? Which one?
- Lacresha Murray: Both.
- Officer: You can't be in both at the same time. Lacresha, but you can't be in both rooms.

The investigator presupposes, in his first utterance, that "the suspect was not in bedroom, playing ball", which exhibits contradiction between two different statements provided by the suspect at different points of the investigation. The suspect denies this presupposition at the beginning, but she provided illogical answer to his question "*Were you in the bedroom or in the bathroom? Which one?*"

Officer:……... You don't recall using a belt?

Lacresha Murray: For what?

Officer: To maybe to discipline the baby,

Lacresha Murray: I don't hit kids.

Officer: And left an injury there.

Lacresha Murray: I don't hit kids. I mean like whip nobody. I am too young, because sometimes I need whipping myself.

Officer: Right. There was definitely an injury right here that was left by something, either a stick, or a rod, or a belt, something like that, and that was also caused at that time.

Lacresha Murray: Probably something I did, but I don't know what happened.

The investigator once again used another informative presupposition, this time to elicit more information about the circumstance of the crime and motivation of the suspect. He uses a presupposition that conflicts with background knowledge, and as such it has to be accommodated. Even though it conflicts with the suspect's best interest, she had to accommodate the investigator's presuppositions, i.e. " *you were angry*", and " *you enjoyed causing injuries to the victim*" which represent the presupposition of the utterances " If you were not angry" and "So, then you must have enjoyed what you were doing then", respectively. This is because the addresser, i.e. the investigator is considered authoritative.

Officer: Causing those injuries to the baby. If you were not angry, you must have been

Lacresha Murray: I wasn't even angry

Officer: So, then you must have enjoyed what you were doing then. because there's a reason why somebody would cause those injuries to the baby. Was it cause you were angry or because you were..

Lacresha Murray: I was...

Officer: You were enjoying it?

Lacresha Murray: I wasn't even angry, I wasn't enjoying it, I was just, I was regular, happy.

Officer: You were what?

Lacresha Murray: Happy.

In these cases, the investigator represents himself as assuming that certain propositions are part of the background or common knowledge. The representation is a transparent pretense, but it is nevertheless by means of this very representation that the main purpose of the communication, which is to get the suspect to accept the presupposed proposition, is accomplished. Therefore, when the investigator manages to make his presupposition acceptable, the suspect indirectly confesses that she was happy when she made the injuries to the baby.

7. Conclusions

1. Relevance theory has its bearing on the notion of informative presupposition and the process of accommodation in general. It envisages presupposition, i.e. implicated premises, as a subset of the contextual assumptions used in processing the utterance. The addressee, in his pursuit of relevance, will interpret the utterance taking the presupposed proposition for granted in order to infer the intended meaning. Relevance, then, is a matter of how well and productively some input interacts with existing salient assumptions of the addressee.

2. Generally, presupposition is a very useful investigation techniques, it may have three basic uses in investigation: it can help to tell the story, it can introduce new items of information and it can help to test suspect's credibility. In each case it makes a legitimate, effective and respectable contribution to the investigation process.

3. The use of *informative presupposition*s, e.g. Alternative Question Methodology, in investigation is very helpful to test the suspect's credibility and to urge him/her to confess the crime.

4. *Informative presupposition* may also be used to elicit more information about the circumstance of the crime and motivation of the suspect. This is done by means of producing a presupposition that conflicts with background knowledge, and due to the power imbalance, the suspect typically has to accommodate it.

5. Investigators sometimes represent themselves as assuming that certain propositions are part of the background of common knowledge. The representation is a transparent pretense, but it is nevertheless by means of the representation that the purpose of communication is accomplished, and upon the suspect's acceptance of the investigator's presupposition, the suspect's credibility is assessed.

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