

## **Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview**

**Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim Abuelwafa**

Lecturer, Language & Translation Department, College of  
Language & Communication,  
Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport

### **Abstract:**

In communication, more is being understood and assumed than is explicitly said. During conversations, speakers make assumptions based on what is true or already known by the listeners. This is done with the help of certain lexis and grammatical structures employed to send and give rise to certain messages. This study is an investigation of the presupposition triggers employed by Meghan and Harry in their television interview with Oprah Winfrey opening up, for the first time, on leaving their roles as royals. The framework used is the one inspired by Liang & Liu (2016) and based on Levinson's classification of triggers (1983). In this study triggers are divided into two major categories, lexical and syntactic. This investigation is done with the aim of analysing the triggers that give rise to certain presuppositions and consequently send certain messages.

**Key words:** *Presupposition – Presupposition triggers – Talk shows – Meghan – Harry.*

## الكشف عن المعنى المستتر: دراسة تحليلية لحفريات الافتراضات المسبقة في نص المقابلة التلفزيونية للأمير هاري وميجان

د. مروة عادل محمد عبد المنعم

مدرس اللغويات، قسم اللغة والترجمة، كلية اللغة والإعلام

الأكاديمية العربية للعلوم والتكنولوجيا والنقل البحري

### ملخص البحث باللغة العربية :

يتم فهم وافترض أكثر مما يقال أثناء التواصل في المحادثات. فأتساءل المحادثات، يضع المستمعون افتراضات بناءً على ما هو صحيح أو معروف بالفعل أو متعارف عليه من قبل المشاركين بالحديث. ويساعد على ذلك التراكيب اللفظية وتراكيب الجمل المستخدمة لإرسال رسائل معينة للمستمع. هذه الورقة البحثية هي دراسة تحليلية للتراكيب التي تمثل محفزات الافتراضات المسبقة التي استخدمها كلا من ميجان وهاري في مقابلهما التلفزيونية مع أوبرا وينفري والتي صرحوا بها عن أسباب تركهم لمهامهم الملكية. ويعد هذا أول تصريح لهم على ترك أدوارهم كأفراد من العائلة المالكة. والمنهجية المستخدمة بالدراسة مستوحاة من (Liang & Liu (2016 ويستند فيها على تصنيف Levinson للمحفزات (١٩٨٣) حيث تنقسم المحفزات إلى فئتين رئيسيتين؛ التراكيب اللفظية وتراكيب الجمل. وتقوم هذه الدراسة على تحليل المحفزات التي استخدمت والتي تؤدي إلى بعض الافتراضات المسبقة وبالتالي إلى إرسال رسائل بعينها. الكلمات المفتاحية: الافتراضات المسبقة، محفزات الافتراضات المسبقة، البرامج الحوارية المتلفزة، ميجان، هاري.

## Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview

Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

### 1. Introduction

In social interactions, language participants communicate their messages to reflect their diverse ideological and cultural environments. Speakers assume in their conversations implicit assumptions related to the shared world of knowledge and to the context of conversation. The truth of these assumptions is unquestionable in its discourse and are known as presuppositions and the acceptance of the truth of these presuppositions by the listeners is described as presupposition accommodation (Manuel, 2014). First introduced by Gottlieb Frege (1892), presupposition was part of the study of the philosophy of language then later launched into the field of linguistics as part of the study of pragmatics. Consequently, special attention started to be paid to the investigation of the linguistic structure of presuppositions. Speakers use certain lexical constructions or linguistic structures that generate presuppositions in their talk. These lexical items and linguistic structures are described as presupposition triggers (Levinson, 1983).

Through presupposition, speakers impose on their listeners their own interpretation of facts or events. Thus, inflicting their own positive or negative image of their narrative. This is accomplished through employing linguistic strategies represented by the presupposition triggers (Liang & Liu, 2016).

The same takes place in the television interviews that are part of talk shows. Speakers hide much of their intended messages in the propositions they make. Using certain linguistic tactics, namely presupposition triggers, they communicate to their audience what they intend to have them believe. After leaving their royal roles with the monarchy, Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, and Prince Harry open up to Oprah Winfrey in a television interview last March 2021. In this interview, they speak for the first time about the reasons they split from the royal family. Through an investigation of the presupposition triggers used in this conversation, this paper attempts to examine how Megan and Harry succeeded to convey to

the audiences their experience and implicitly uncover their relationship with the royals.

## 1.2 Research Questions

**The study attempts to answer the following questions:**

- How can presupposition triggers give rise to certain messages?
- How can speakers employ certain triggers to inflict their image on the audience?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Presupposition

Conversations are social activities in which speakers manipulate the different linguistic tools as techniques to deliver their intended messages. This is how effective communication is achieved and a more interactive communicative environment created between speakers and audiences. One particular means of creating interactive and effective communication is presupposition, by dint of being a linguistic aspect of pragmatics, which offers speakers the necessary tools to encode their messages (Huang, 2011). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) aims at uncovering and investigating the concealed messages deliberately or unconsciously embedded in utterances (Fairclough, 1995). In other words, CDA attempts to decode the ideological personalities of writers or speakers.

Yule (2010) defines presupposition as what speakers assume to be true before making an utterance. The shared world of knowledge between speakers and listeners plays a pivotal role in the interpretation of the presuppositions made. Hence, the presupposition is made on an assumption based on a certain background understanding, which is associated with a certain proposition whose truth condition is taken for granted in the discourse under question. Levinson (2001) defines presupposition as the common ground embraced in the utterance. This common ground is assumed by all participants contributing in the speech event and is seen as a piece of information or a proposition whose truth is taken for granted when uttering the sentence (Huang, 2007). Presuppositions are the pieces of information triggered by particular linguistic structures; these are deemed true by the

## Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview

Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

participants involved in any communicative context (Richardson, 2007).

According to Stalnaker (1978), common ground or a shared world of knowledge is a key concept in presuppositions which every participant in the communicative activity accepts and turns into a common belief for all participants.

There are two main qualities of presupposition, constancy under negation and defeasibility. The presupposition created using particular lexis or syntactic structure remains exactly the same even when the statement made is negated. This is in the case of constancy under negation. As for the property of defeasibility; cancelling presuppositions takes place when they are incompatible with the shared background assumption, conversational implicatures, and the discourse context in question (Huang, 2011). Generally, presupposition has been seen as a diverse collection of various phenomena (Levinson, 1983).

There are six types of presupposition, existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counter-factual. Existential presupposition is concerned with asserting or denying the existence of entities proposed by the speaker. Asserting that something is true is insinuated through factive presuppositions and asserting that something is not true through non-factive. Lexical and structural presuppositions are detected through using certain lexical or structural constructions. Counter factual presupposition is detected through not only asserting that something is not true but is the exact opposite of truth (Yule, 2010). Most of these types of presuppositions are traced and differentiated through using certain linguistic structures.

### 2.2 Presupposition Triggers

Certain lexical items and grammatical constructions are employed by speakers in their speech to insinuate certain meanings (Stalnaker, 2014). These are described as *dedicated presupposition triggers*; "lexical items whose sole function appears to be the triggering of a presupposition (Stalnaker, 2014, 55)." Utterances that are assumed by writers and readers or speakers and listeners

embrace the presuppositions made and serve as common ground elements between the various participants in any communicative activity (Perl, 2020).

Presuppositions are made using certain linguistic strategies named triggers. These triggers are linguistic structures or lexical constructions which can indicate that presuppositions exist in an utterance or proposition. In other words, a trigger represents a prediction of an assumption made in a sentence. Hence, a presupposition trigger is any linguistic construction that presupposes a certain meaning in the proposition (Leech, 2016). Implying messages through triggering presuppositions has been a wide area of research in different genres including advertisements, political speeches, journal texts, news and tv interviews. (Al-zubeiry, 2020; Du, 2012; Li, 2010; Liang & Liu, 2016; Pang, 2016).

There have been many attempts to classify presupposition triggers. These attempts include Levinson's classification (1983) of thirteen types that include factive verbs, imperative verbs, change of state verbs, temporal clauses, cleft sentences, comparisons and contrasts and questions. In 2010, Yule presented a means of classifying presupposition triggers into six classes based on the six classes of presuppositions, existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counter-factual triggers. Another reclassification following Levinson's divided triggers into three general groups encompassing types of verbs, adjuncts, and phrases and clauses. The method of classification adopted in the present study classifies triggers into two broad groups, lexical and syntactic (Liang & Liu, 2016). The first class of lexical presupposition triggers includes verbs, restrictive expressions, and particles. On the syntactic level, temporal clauses, compare and contrast structures, counterfactual conditionals, non-restrictive relative clauses, cleft sentences, and the different types of questions. In this study, the interview is analyzed for the available presupposition triggers to examine the presuppositions made by the interviewees in their interview with Oprah Winfrey.

## Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview

Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

### 2.3 TV Talk Shows

Talk shows are discussions that show on media platforms that include various topics on television or radio stations and hosted by an anchor and have at least one guest. The guest must be concerned or interested in the topic being discussed and that is of interest to the public. Television and internet interviews are the most prominent genres of media communication and the interviews themselves are seen as unique communicative activities, which encompass dialogues between interviewers and interviewees, hosts and guests. The dialogue embraces topics of interest to the guest and the public where questions and answers alternate aiming at giving information, opinions, an account on a personal experience, and judgements (Perez & Cremedas, 2014).

Older versions of television interviews included only two participants and a traditionally prepared set of questions and formal answers. With the development of TV interviews, flexibility became a dominant feature. This includes a fusion between colloquial and journalistic genres which determine its spontaneous, flexible, and informal style. Whether traditional or modern, interviews ensure the precision in delivering the interviewees' content and intended communicative intentions as first-hand material to the audience (van Dijk, 2016). The degree of sincerity and rightness of the speaker depends largely on two pragmatic functions of the interview as a genre, the message and the creation of the impact of speech. Audiences bond with the interviewee through the latter's verbal contributions which enable the audiences to believe in the rectitude of the speaker and take in his/her opinion (Kovtunen et al., 2018). Hence, interviews act as favored floors for establishing a trustworthy and cosy atmosphere that enables audiences to observe the psycho-emotional reactions of interviewees to examine their degree of sincerity (Pincus et al., 2016).

The linguistic dimension of interviews as a genre model is determined through a set of lexical and grammatical resources. The selected linguistic tools depend largely on the communicative aims, subjects, and situations of the conversation. The conversational character of the interview is shaped by lexical, semantic and syntactic features. This may include complete/incomplete phrases, repetitions, repeated questions, hesitation marks, tautologies and many other linguistic tactics (Ureta, 2011).

Pragmatic presupposition governs the bond between presupposition and the use of a sentence in any utterance. Taking the truth value of a proposition, in any conversation, for granted is a condition to presuppose a proposition pragmatically. It is also anticipated that anyone involved in the communicative context of the utterance would also assume its truth (Stalnaker, 1973). This is part and parcel of the design of conversations in talk shows.

#### **2.4 Presupposition and Context**

Context plays a pivotal role in any communicative event and highly influences the language used by the participants. In other words, the social context enforces on the linguistic content a certain character to match the different settings in which it is exchanged. In accordance with this, Systemic Functional Linguistics sketches three central factors or components that determine the linguistic means at play in any communicative context; the field of discourse, the tenor of discourse, and the mode of discourse (Halliday, 1978, 2014). Consequently, speakers fine-tune their grammar and lexis and other linguistic features to be compatible with the field or the subject matter, the tenor or relationship between the participants engaged in the exchange, and the mode or the channel of communication. Hence, when analysing discourse employed in communicative events, we consider the three aspects and how they intermingle to shape the linguistic choices made (Stalnaker, 2014).



## Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview

Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

### 3. Data Description and Methodology

This section displays the data chosen for analysis in the study and the theoretical framework. This is a qualitative study and the numbers of occurrences of the presupposition triggers are not the focus of the paper.

#### 3.1 Data Selection

The data chosen for analysis in the present study is the interview Oprah Winfrey conducted with Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, after leaving their royal roles. They speak for the first time about the years they spent with the royal family and the reasons behind their split from the monarchy. This interview is chosen to investigate how the interviewees, Meghan and Harry, use presupposition triggers to express their suffering and talk about their experience without having to explicitly mention this. For this reason, the analysis is confined to their responses and not to the questions asked by the interviewer. The interview lasts for about two hours.

#### 3.2 Analytical Framework

The data chosen is analyzed using a classification of presupposition triggers suggested by Liang and Liu (2016) and inspired by Levinson's classification (1983). This method classifies triggers into two broad levels of lexical and syntactic triggers based on the reclassifications of presupposition triggers by Li (2010) and Du (2012). Table1 displays the presupposition trigger two-level classification adopted in the study.

Presupposition Triggers	Classification		Examples
Lexical Level	Verbs	Iterative Factive Implicative Change of State Judging	restore, return know, remember, understand, realize manage, avoid stop, begin, arrive praise, accuse, criticize
	Restrictive Expressions	(in)definite articles pronouns other expressions	a, an, the he, his, her, they another, only
	Iterative particles		again, too, either...
	Other particles		even, still, just...
Syntactic Level	Temporal clauses		after, during, whenever, when, as...
	Comparison & Contrasts		more than, as much as, comparative constructions...
	Counter-factual Conditionals		conditions contrary to facts
	Non-restrictive relative clauses		who, which, when, where...
	Cleft sentences		It is/wasn't...that/who...
	Questions		Yes/no questions, rhetorical questions, wh-questions

**Table 1: The Classification of presupposition Triggers**

#### 4. Data Analysis

This section displays examples of the presupposition triggers evident in the interview on both the lexical and the syntactic levels. In every example, the symbol  $\rho$  stands for *presupposes*. For every type of presupposition trigger evident in the interview, examples

## Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview

Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

are presented and analyzed. The analysis focuses on Meghan and Harry's responses. The first section is dedicated to examples of presupposition triggers on the lexical level followed by those on the syntactic level.

### 4.1 Lexical Presupposition Triggers

On the lexical level, presupposition triggers encompass a list of lexical options that includes verbs (factive, implicative, iterative, change-of-state, and judging), and restrictive expressions (definite and indefinite articles and pronouns, iterative particles). These lexical choices are used by speakers to create certain assumptions and raise presuppositions.

#### 4.1.1 Iteratives

All examples of iteratives are embraced in this section since they suggest similar presuppositions. This includes iterative verbs, adverbs, and expressions. Iterative expressions indicate repetition and presuppose that something or some state and condition existed before (Karttunen, 1983). This implies that the past is repeating itself. Many examples evident of the use of iteratives exist in the interview. Some examples are:

(1) *So we weren't reinventing the wheel here.*

***$\rho$  Other members of the monarchy have left their royal roles before.***

About leaving their royal roles, Harry and Megan were not doing something that was not done before by other royals. This presupposes that other family members have done exactly the same thing before, which gives the impression that being part of the family is continuously an intolerable nuisance to many.

(2) *Harry: From this . . . this constant barrage. My biggest concern was history repeating itself and I've said that before on numerous occasions, very publicly. And what I was seeing was history repeating itself. But more, perhaps. Or definitely far more dangerous because then you add race in and you add social media in. And when I'm talking about history repeating itself, I'm talking about my . . . my mother.*

**ρ Had they stayed with the royal family, Meghan could have lost her life just like Princess Diana.**

The iterative verb *repeat* is used three time in a row by Harry relating what happened to his mother, late Princess Diana, to what could have happened to Meghan if they hadn't left the family. This presupposes and raises the issue of conspiracy against Meghan and that it is not safe being with the family. This also brings back to memory the miserable life of Princess Diana and the her tragic end.

(3) *Meghan: And, again, I wasn't seeing it, but it's almost worse when you feel it through the expression of my mom or my friends*

**ρ Meghan was under continuous attacks by the British newspaper.**

Meghan couldn't, in the many times this happened, correctly evaluate the consequences of what the British newspapers used to write about her. The iterative adverb 'again' chosen by Meghan presupposes that she was not given the protection needed from the monarchy many times especially when lies were written about her in the British newspapers and that she kept getting information about how intense this was from her mother and friends. By this presupposition, Meghan confirms that the attack on her was intended and the support she needed was always absent.

(4) *And I realised that it was all happening just because I was breathing.*

**ρ The royal family wanted Meghan dead. It would all end, once she is gone.**

This is one of the sudden presuppositions made by Meghan, where two types of triggers are used, iterative adverb and a factive verb (will be referred to later). The iterative adverb *just* presupposes that attack on Meghan is intended and personalized and that they wanted her dead. The iterative adverb *just* used by Meghan here presupposes that the monarchy wanted her dead and that she is left unprotected against all the attacks for the intention of getting rid of her. This brings the memory of Princess Diana and her death back to light and suggests that it was planned.

## Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview

Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

(5) *it was one of the things that... it still haunts me is this photograph that someone had sent me.*

### **ρ The damage that happened to her is unforgettable.**

The use of the iterative adverb *still* presupposes that the suicidal thoughts that captivated Meghan when she saw how she looked in a picture were the spark of her fear for her mental health. A thought that never stopped.

Throughout the interview and in the many times, the presupposition trigger *still* chosen by Meghan presupposes that the feeling she had during her stay as part of the royal family assuming her role has influenced her years after leaving the family. By this presupposition, Meghan highlights that the terrifying impact of the damage she has been exposed to years ago has never waned.

The next section displays examples of factive verbs as triggers in the interview.

#### **4.1.2 Factive Verbs**

The requirements of presuppositions made through using factive verbs are viewed as “special cases of the requirement imposed by conditions for reference (Stalnaker, 2014, 81)”. Factive verbs include verbs such as *know*, *realize*, and *regret* and they are employed to trigger that what is mentioned is a fact. Phrasal verbs such as *being odd*, *be aware* and *be glad that* are also considered factive presuppositions (Yule, 1996). Examples of factive verbs in the interview are:

(6) *We were both aware in advance of that this wasn't our day, this was the day planned for the world.*

### **ρ Their official wedding was not even close to what they wanted for themselves.**

They knew it was more of an act. From their first day as part of the family, they were conscious that they have to fake a certain life dictated by the monarchy.

(7) *we just sat there and we chatted and it was lovely and easy and I think, thank God,*

*I hadn't known a lot about the family.*

**ρ There is the ugly face of the family and being ignorant of it is always better.**

This is about Meghan meeting the Queen for the first time. Having used *known* presupposes that knowledge about the family means uncovering the worst and ugly face of reality; something that she experienced. “[...] the case of “know”, lends some support to the hypothesis that knowledge claims are false, and so their denials true, when the putative fact does not exist, (Stalnaker, 2014, 83).”

(8) *Meghan: it was only once we were married and everything started to really worsen that I came to understand that not only was I not being protected, but they were willing to lie to protect other members of the family but they weren't willing to tell the truth to protect me and my husband.*

**ρ She was intentionally unprotected by the monarchy.**

Meghan was completely unprotected from the continuous and several attacks by the British newspapers. She was intentionally left unprotected unlike other members that the family would lie to protect ,but wouldn't tell the truth to protect her. Meghan presupposes it is a fact; support and protection were voluntarily absent.

(9) *Harry: But my upbringing in the system, of which I was brought up in and what I've been exposed to, it wasn't . . . I wasn't aware of it to start with. But, my god, it doesn't take very long to suddenly become aware of it.*

**ρ Bias has always existed in the family and came to the surface with Meghan.**

Throughout his years as part of the family and only until he married Meghan, that it became obvious how biased his family is especially in their relation with Meghan.

(10) *Meghan: And I realised that it was all happening just because I was breathing.*

## Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview

Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

### ρ The family wanted her dead.

This a clear declaration made by Meghan that the monarchy wanted her dead. It presents, as a fact, that everything would stop if she is not alive. This brings the memory of the fate of Princess Diana back to light; an allusion that is repeated several times.

The following section displays examples of implicative verbs as triggers.

#### 4.1.3 Implicative Verbs

Implicative verbs are triggers that hold the presupposition that certain necessary conditions ascertain an event has taken place (Karttunen 1971). Examples of factive verbs include manage, fail, avoid, and happen. In the interview, there is no evidence of implicative verbs.

#### 4.1.4 Change of State Verbs

Change-of-state verbs include verbs that comprise a kind of shift or change in behavior or state or condition. Employing this type of verbs implies that something or some condition existed before. This category of verbs includes stop, begin, continue, finish, cease, come, go etc... (Capone, 2017). Examples of this type of triggers in the interview are:

(11) *Meghan: And so, yeah, of course that breeds loneliness when you've come from such a full life or when you've come from freedom. I think the easiest way that now people can understand it is what we've all gone through in lockdown.*

### ρ The years she spent in the monarchy were void of life and freedom unlike her earlier life.

Meghan sums it all up; she was imprisoned, lonely and almost dead. She even likens living with the royalty to the lockdown during the outbreak of the Corona Virus. Employing *come* as a trigger confirms that another type of life existed before.

(12) *And I was — I went to the institution, and I said that I needed to go somewhere to get help. I said that, 'I've never felt this way before, and I need to go somewhere'.*

**ρ She was in dire need for help. She sought help from the family, but never got it.**

Meghan begged for medical assistance after having suicidal thoughts but was never granted any positive response. In other words, the family's image is more important than her mental health or even her life. Using the trigger *go* more than once confirms that she was yearning for assistance.

(13) *Meghan: And it was during that part of my pregnancy, especially, that I started to understand what our continued reality was going to look like.*

**ρ There will be no change. Not giving their children royal titles was already decided.**

The reality of their status in the family will not be changed; they will not be protected, and their son will not be given the title and consequently not protected too. Employing the trigger *continued* confirms that everything was planned from the beginning and will never change.

(14) *Harry: I am hurt. But at the same time I completely respect my grandmother's decision. I would still love for us to be able to continue to support those associations, albeit without the title or the role.*

**ρ Harry has always supported the association, even when they haven't done the same to him.**

Harry has confirmed more than once throughout the interview that his love, respect, and support for the family will last forever. This is clarified through the trigger *continue* and confirms that this was never the case with him.

The following section shows examples of restrictive expressions as triggers.

#### **4.1.5 Restrictive Expressions**

Restrictive expressions are the words used to modify a noun phrase. This encompasses not only the definite and indefinite articles, but also the possessive pronouns like his or her which are more dominant and significant in the interview (Liang & Liu, 2016). Examples of this kind of triggers in the interview are:



Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in  
Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview

Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

(15) *Meghan: Because we were doing our job. Our job was to be on and to smile.*

**ρ Regardless of how they feel, they have to act as their assigned job requires.**

As part of the royal family, they have prescribed jobs they have to carry out. At that point, Meghan was suffering on the psychological level and was having suicidal thoughts. However, as part of the royal family, she is not granted neither the help she really needs, nor the opportunity not to be involved in her public tasks which places extra pressure on her.

(16) *Meghan: And I grieve a lot. I mean, I've lost my father. I lost a baby. I nearly lost my name. I mean, there's the loss of identity.*

**ρ Being part of the family is the reason behind many losses. There are no gains.**

Oprah asked Meghan if she is concerned about the family's reaction to the information she revealed. She answered clearly that she is not very much concerned about how they would react since they were the reason behind many losses in her life in the past four years. This is enhanced through the use of the possessive pronoun *my* in *my father*, and *my name* and the use of the indefinite article *a* in *a baby*. Using a zero-article structure with the noun *identity* makes it seem so generic and significant. If one loses one's identity, one definitely loses everything.

(17) *Harry: But now, you know, now we — we've got our family. We've got, you know, the four of us and our two dogs, and it's great.*

**ρ It is only now that they have a family.**

Harry sees that it is only now that he has a family. The use of the plural possessive pronoun *our* presupposes that when he was part of the monarchy, he never felt as family or as even part of it. This reinforces the loneliness they suffered from with the royals.

There are other linguistic particles that trigger certain presuppositions that speakers employ to send their messages. The following section displays more examples of triggers on the lexical level.

#### 4.1.6 Other Particles

Along the same veins of the above categories are other linguistic items employed to trigger certain meanings. This includes particles such as even, still and just. The focus in this section is to exemplify the use of even, which occurs many times in the interview, since just and still have already been discussed in the iteratives section. An example is:

(18) *Meghan: So, even as things started to roll out in the media that I didn't see — but my friends would call me and say, 'Meg, this is really bad' — because I didn't see it, I'd go, 'Don't worry. I'm being protected'.*

#### **p No matter how things were bad, she had faith in the monarchy protecting her.**

The particle *even* here determines the progressive relationship between the two ideas or sentences; vile stories about her were rolling out in the British newspapers and she still had faith in the family to protect her against this and respond to the lies. This leaves a deep impression in the audience; she fully trusted an untrustworthy institution.

The following section includes examples of the presupposition triggers on the syntactic level.

### 5.1 Syntactic Presupposition Triggers

Presuppositions are not only made on the lexical level. On the syntactic level, triggers are also employed to create certain messages. The first type in this category are the temporal clauses.

#### 5.1.1 Temporal Clauses

Temporal clauses are adverbial clauses expressing time where the reader or listener is informed of the time when the action of the main verb occurred (Capone, 2017).

**Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview**

**Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim**

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

(19) *Harry: Like, she safely delivered Archie during a period of time which was so cruel and so mean.*

**ρ She gave birth to her child in their terrible time with the family.**

The use of *during* confirms that Meghan suffered a lot as part of the monarchy in a period of time when she was pregnant and when she gave birth to her child, who, they were clearly informed, was not going to be given a title and consequently was not going to be protected.

(20) *Meghan: I have one. My regret is believing them when they said I would be protected.*

**ρ They lied about protecting her.**

This is a clear declaration from Meghan that she had put her trust in the wrong institution. Meghan spent some time believing the family's promises that they will protect her and her family.

The following section displays examples of the use of counter-factual conditional as triggers.

### **5.1.2 Counter-factual Conditionals**

The *if- clause* trigger presupposes that the information is contrary to reality. Counter factual conditionals are conditional sentences that discuss what would have been the case or what would have been true in different circumstances (Perl, 2020). In the interview, there is evidence of using this type of triggers. Examples of this type are:

(21) *Meghan: And I regret believing that because I think, 'had I really seen that that wasn't happening, I would have been able to do more'.*

**ρ She would have stood for her right in the face of the family.**

The true situation was not clear to Meghan. She couldn't act differently and fight for her right as she couldn't see what was really being planned.

(22) *Meghan: But I knew that if I didn't say it, that I would do it.*

**ρ Meghan would have committed suicide if she hadn't told Harry of her suffering.**

Meghan asked the family for help and got no positive response. If she hadn't voiced her fears, she would have committed suicide.

(23) *Harry: And as she touched on earlier, if she had read anything, she wouldn't be here now.*

**ρ Meghan could have committed suicide if she read what was written about her in the newspapers.**

The family exerted no effort in correcting the false image propagated about Meghan in the newspapers. By that time, Meghan was suffering from her mental health; a suffering for which she did not get the help she begged for. Had she read what was written about her in the British newspapers, she would have committed suicide back then.

The following section provides examples for the presupposition triggers employed through comparisons and contrasts.

### 5.1.3 Comparisons and Contrasts

Some particles indicate comparisons and contrasts. This includes particles such as *too*, *back*, and the *comparative structures*. What is being compared and contrasted with mark the presuppositions (Levinson, 2001). There are a few examples of this type of triggers in the interview, particularly of the comparative constructions.

(24) *Meghan: It takes so much courage to voice that. And as I said, I was ashamed. I'm supposed to be stronger than that.*

**ρ In her suffering, she was not as strong as she thought of herself.**

She thought she is stronger in voicing her fears and worries about her mental health. Although she had the courage to voice her

**Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview**

**Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim**

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

fears for her mental health, yet she believes she should have shown more courage.

(25) *'I know there's an obsession with how things look, but has anyone talked about how it feels? Because right now, I could not feel lonelier'.*

**ρ She was extremely lonely when she was with the family.**

The only feeling she had while she was with the family is a terrible feeling of loneliness, which has resulted in her suffering.

(26) Harry: From this...this constant barrage. My *biggest* concern was history repeating itself and I've said that before on numerous occasions, very publicly. And what I was seeing was history repeating itself. But more, perhaps. Or definitely *far more dangerous* because then you add race in and you add social media in.

**ρ Meghan could have been killed just like Princess Diana.**

Throughout the interview, there are repeated hints to Princess Diana's tragic fate. In this example, Harry makes it clear, through using the superlative *biggest* to modify the noun *concern*, that his fear that Meghan could have been killed was not an eliminated thought. What makes it look tragically close to happen is intensified through the use of the comparative construction *more dangerous* pointing out that the issue of Meghan's race ignited the situation further.

(27) *I think the easiest way that now people can understand it is what we've all gone through in lockdown.*

**ρ Her life with the monarchy was extremely lonely and frustrating.**

Likening her feeling of loneliness to how people felt during the Pandemic lockdown creates a terrible image of what sort of life it was and how much she suffered.

(28) *Meghan: It was really hard to be able to see those as compartmentalised conversations.*

**ρ Denying her son security was part of the family's conversations.**

There were private conversations in the family about Archie and about no security, no title and how dark his skin might be when he's born.

**5.1.3 Non-restrictive Relative Clauses**

(29) *Meghan: And growing up as a woman of colour, as a little girl of colour, I know how important representation is. I know how you want to see someone who looks like you in certain positions.*

**ρ There is no representation of people of colour in the monarchy.**

Meghan saw her presence in the family as a realization of a dream of the people of colour who were never represented by members in the family.

(30) *Meghan: And that — you know, I share this, because there's so many people who are afraid to voice that they need help.*

**ρ So many people are suffering on the psychological level, but don't have the courage to voice their pain.**

When Meghan voiced that she is afraid for her mental health, she was let down by several people because of the image of the family. She admits this now as a means to help those who are suffering the same to have a voice and ask for help and not to be ashamed of their suffering.

(31) *It's easy to have an image that is so far from reality, and that's what was so tricky over those past few years, when the perception and the reality are two different things and you're being judged on the perception but you're living the reality of it.*

## Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview

Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

### **ρ The reality of the monarchy is far from the fantasy of the fairy tale.**

Living for some time with the family and witnessing the tragic moments, Meghan came to the understanding that the monarchy or the royal family's real face is completely different from the fairy tale image of the royals. What she thought might be the case is far away from reality.

The following section displays more examples of presupposition triggers on the syntactic level particularly on the level of clefts.

#### **5.1.4 Cleft Sentences**

Through clefts presuppositions are made through emphasizing certain information to the listener. It- clauses are the most common types of clefts. Some examples of cleft structures are evident in the interview to place extra emphasis on certain ideas. Examples of cleft structures are:

(32) *Meghan: And it was a decision that they felt was appropriate.*

### **ρ Denying their son the title was the right decision.**

(33) *Meghan: And I zoomed in, and what I saw was the truth of what that moment was, because right before we had to leave for that, I had just had that conversation with Harry that morning, and it was the next day that I talked to the institution.*

### **ρ It was high time she gets some help.**

Voicing her suffering took place right after she saw how she looked in the tournament photo.

#### **5.1.2 Questions**

The three main types of questions, rhetorical, open-ended-Wh - and the alternative questions-yes or no are often said to communicate the presupposition of the assertive counterparts and interrogative forms. It is often argued that yes-or-no questions

usually communicate pointless or meaningless presuppositions (Levinson, 1983). However, in the conversation under analysis, meaningful yes-or-no questions are evident. In the conversation, this question type exceeds the other two not only in number, but in significance as well. The following section examines examples of the different question types employed in the interview as triggers.

(34) *Meghan: What does it have to do with pride or vanity?*

**ρ She was continuously being attacked for the smallest of actions.**

In the British newspapers, Meghan was continuously being attacked for cradling her baby bump unlike Kate who did the same action but was not condemned for it. The yes-or-no question shows that there is nothing about vanity or pride in the action and also shows that the attack is completely personalized since others would do and get praised.

(35) *Meghan: And, yeah, when you say, 'Was it what it looked like?', my understanding and my experience of the past four years is it's nothing like what it looks like.*

**ρ The suffering she experienced is indescribable.**

The four years she spent as part of the monarchy represent the worst suffering in her life. The yes-or-no question confirms that it is worse than what anyone would imagine.

(38) *'I know there's an obsession with how things look, but has anyone talked about how it feels? Because right now, I could not feel lonelier'.*

**ρ No one cared about how she really feels or about her suffering**

Describing her suffering and feeling of loneliness, Meghan suffered the most from the negligence. When she voiced her fears and psychological pain, she was completely let down by several members of the monarchy who are supposed to be there for help and protection. The yes-or-no question reinforces that how she felt was never on the priority list of the family.



**Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview**

**Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim**

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

(39) *Meghan: I thought, 'Can you just tell them the truth? Can you say to the world you're not giving him a title, and we want to keep him safe, and that if he's not a prince, then it's not part of the tradition?*

**ρ The truth about not giving Archie the title was never told.**

Archie was not going to be given the title as a prince, because they were afraid he would be of color just like his mother. This racist reality was never going to be revealed to the world and the child was not going to be granted any protection. The concessive yes-or-no questions confirms this idea and also shows the dilemma Meghan was in.

(40) *Meghan: I mean, they would go on the record and negate the most ridiculous story for anyone, right? And I thought, well, if they're not going to kill things like that, then what are we going to do?*

**ρ The family protects everyone other than Meghan.**

This example has two types of question, yes-or-no and a wh-question. It was clear through the various situations that Meghan passed through as part of the family that they will not defend or protect her. Protecting others against the lies told about them is never the same case with Meghan. They would lie for the others, but won't tell the truth to defend her, as she mentioned several times during the interview. This is highlighted in the the yes-or-no question *right?* This is exactly what has helped them take their decision to split and this is confirmed through the wh-question *then what are we going to do?* They understood the reality of their situation; the family will not protect them at any time.

(41) *Harry: Their justification is a change in status, of which I pushed back and said, 'Well, is there a change of threat or risk?' And after many weeks of waiting, eventually I got the confirmation that no, the risk and threat hasn't changed.*

**ρ They will not be protected although the threat and danger to their lives are the same.**

The family cared the least for the safety of Harry and Meghan and of course of their son. Even when the danger to their lives is never changed, the family has taken the decision to remove any protection unlike the rest of the royals.

## **5. Discussion & Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the presupposition triggers employed by both Meghna and Harry in their interview, it can be argued that the use of the different types of triggers helps to better communicate messages and consequently bond with their audience. The messages that both speakers implicitly send are made salient to the hearer through the presuppositions made. The continuous indirect reference to the drastic fate of late Princess Diana has brought to the minds that image of a conspiring monarchy. What happened in the past can be repeated and can happen to Meghan; a sad reality hinted at through certain presupposition triggers hinted at throughout the interview by both speakers who made their decision, so history won't *repeat* itself. The amount of suffering and loss that Meghan experienced is enhanced as she says *my baby* and *my father* mentioning some of what she lost. More than once, Meghan hints that not *knowing* the royal family well at the beginning as a blessing, making an impression that what is hidden, or the true face of the family is far worse than anyone could imagine. All these implicit messages are managed through employing several presupposition triggers on both the lexical and syntactic levels; an analysis of which is the aim of this study. Whether lexical or syntactic, presupposition triggers play a pivotal role in reinforcing information, creating a more vivid and economic style, enhance the relationship with the audience to as to aid the speakers in achieving their real communicative goals.

**Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview**

**Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim**

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

**6. References**

- [1] Al-zubeiry, Hameed. (2020). *Presupposition Triggers in British and Saudi English Newspaper Opinions*. Theory and Practice in Language Studies. 10. 734. 10.17507/tpls.1007.03.
- [2] Capone, A. (2017). *Presuppositions as conversational phenomena*. *Lingua*, 198, 22-37.
- [3] Du, Y. H. (2012). *An Analysis of the Use of Pragmatic Presuppositions in Obama's Inaugural Address*. Nanjing: Nanjing Normal University.
- [4] Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. London : Longman.
- [5] Frege, G. (1892). *On Sense and Reference*. In P. Geach & M. Black (Eds.), *Translation from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*. Oxford: Blackwell. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2181485>.
- [6] Garcia-carpintero, M. (2014). *Accommodating Presuppositions*. *Topoi*. 35. 1-8. 10.1007/s11245-014-9264-5.
- [7] Huang, Y. (2011). *Types of Inference: Entailment, Presupposition, and Implicature*. In W. Bublitz & N. R. Norrick (Eds.), *Foundation of Pragmatics*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/9783110214260.397>
- [8] Huang, Y. (2007). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [9] Karttunen, L. (1983). *Presuppositional Phenomena*. Mimeo. Department of Linguistics,

University of Texas, Austin. In Levinson, S. C. (ed.), *Pragmatics* (pp. 181-184). Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press.

[10] Kovtunenکو, V., Borisenكو, V. A., Byلكو, S. V., Minakو, N. A., Rogacheو, V. I. (2018).

*Interview As A Genre of New Media Communication: Rhetorical Relations and Pragmatic*

*Effects*, *XLinguae*, 11(2), 95-105 DOI: 10.18355/XL.2018.11.02.08.

[11] Leech, G. N. (2016). *Principles of pragmatics*. London: Routledge

[12] Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[13] Levinson, S. C. (2001). *Pragmatics*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

[14] Li, X. X. (2010). *A Presuppositional Study of American Political Discourse—Based on the*

*Speeches by American President Obama*. Shandong: Shandong Normal University.

[15] Liang, R. & Liu, Y. (2016). *An Analysis of Presupposition Triggers in Hilary Clinton's First*

*Campaign Speech*. *International Journal of English Linguistics*. 6. 68. 10.5539/ijel.v6n5p68.

[16] Pang, Y. (2016). *Presupposition Triggers and the Linguistic Features of Print Advertising*

*Language*. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 3.3, 121-125. Doi:

[http://ijllnet.com/journals/Vol\\_3\\_No\\_5\\_November\\_2016/15.pdf](http://ijllnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_5_November_2016/15.pdf)

**Revealing the Concealed: An Investigation of Presupposition Triggers in Meghan and Harry's T.V. Interview**

**Dr. Marwa Adel Mohamed Abdel Moneim**

مجلة وادي النيل للدراسات والبحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية والتربوية (مجلة علمية محكمة)

- [17] Perl, C. (2020). *Presuppositions, Attitudes, and Why They Matter*. Australasian Journal of Philosophy, 98. 2, 363-381.  
Doi :

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00048402.2019.1621911>

- [18] Richardson, J. E. (2007). *Analyzing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse*

*Analysis*. NY: Palgrave, Macmillan.

- [19] Perez, S. & Cremedas, M. (2014). *The Multimedia Journalist in Large-Market Television*

*Newsrooms: Can Old Dogs Learn New Tricks? Do They Want To?*, Electronic News, 8(3), 159- 176.

- [20] Pincus, H., Wojcieszak, M., Boomgarden, H., (2016) *Do Multimedia Matter? Cognitive and*

*Affective Effects of Embedded Multimedia Journalism*, Journalism and Mass Communication

Quarterly, 94(3), 747-771 doi: 10.1177/1077699016654679.

- [21] Stalnaker, Robert. (1973) "Presuppositions." *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 2 (4): 447–57. 945  
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/bf00262951>.

- [22] Stalnaker, R (1978) *Assertion*. In: Cole P (ed) *Syntax and Semantics*. Academic Press, New

York, pp 315–332. Also in Stalnaker, R. (1999) *Context and Content*. Oxford UP, Oxford, pp 78 – 95.

- [23] Stalnaker, R. (2014) *Context, Context And Content*(Oxford, 2014; online ed, Oxford Academic, 21 Aug.2014), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199645169.001.0001>,

accessed 28 July 2022.

- [24] Thooyibah, L. (2017). *Presupposition Triggers - A Comparative Analysis Between Oral News and Written Online News Discourse*. JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy). 1. 10. 10.25157/jall.v1i2.1733.
- [25] Ureta, A. (2011). The Potential Of Web-Only Feature Stories. *Journalism Studies*, 12(2), 188- 204.
- [26] van Dijk (2016). *Picturizing Science: The Science Documentary as a Multimedia Spectacle*, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 9(1), 5-24.
- [27] Yule, G. (2010). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511757754.011>