

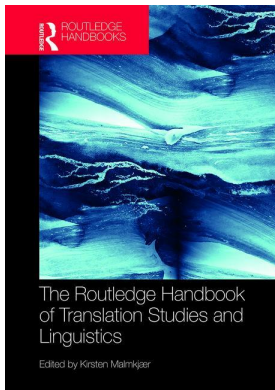
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# Implicature and presupposition in translation and interpreting

*Ying Cui and Yanli Zhao*

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## Introduction

Translation and interpretation both involve the transference of meaning between languages and cultures, the former in the written form and the latter in the oral or sometimes sign-language form. Translation is the conveyance of the meaning of a source-language text to the target-language text, and the translator usually has time and access to resources to produce an accurate translation. Interpretation is the facilitating of oral communication between users of different languages, and the interpreter has neither time nor access to resources when doing interpretation. While there are various kinds of interpretation depending on the occasion, such as court interpretation, conference interpretation, and escort interpretation, there are two major types of interpretation according to the mode of practice: namely consecutive interpretation and simultaneous interpretation. In consecutive interpreting, the interpreter speaks after the source-language speaker completes a few sentences. The interpreter listens and takes notes as the speaker progresses through the message, and when the speaker pauses or finishes speaking, the interpreter renders the portion of the message into the target language. In simultaneous interpretation, the source-language speaker speaks continuously, and the interpreter has to render the message into the target language as quickly as s/he can formulate it from the source language while listening to the speaker. In both of the two modes of interpretation, the interpreter needs to analyse the utterance, grasp the meaning, and transfer it to the target language. In this sense, interpretation is linked to translation. In other words, while translation and interpretation have their differences, as interpretation requires a more timely response on the part of the interpreter who does not have as much time to ponder upon the issues as translators do and has to make decisions then and there, they share some common features in that they both entail the analysis of the original text or utterance and the reproduction of the meaning and implications in the target language.

Analysing the original text or utterance and reproducing the meaning in the target language involves more than the semantic meaning, and translators and interpreters also need to take into account the meaning beyond the texts and read between the lines in order to produce translations that are both accurate and functional. Such extra-textual meaning is often conveyed by means of implicature and presupposition. The term “implicature” is derived from the

verb “imply” and refers to what is implicit in actual language use (Mey 2001, 99–100). The term “presupposition”, as the prefix “pre-” indicates, refers to something speakers assume to be case before making a statement; it is related to implicature in that it is also something not explicitly said in a text, but it is more complicated or even controversial partly because of its scope. While presupposition plays an important role in language comprehension, there has been little consensus concerning its nature or operations in textualisation. Different opinions and viewpoints have been proposed, and there is “more literature on presupposition than on almost any other topic in pragmatics (excepting perhaps speech acts)” (Levinson 1983, 167). Presupposition is regarded as “the least established and least uniform notion of pragmatics” (Seigerdahl 1996, 185), for “virtually everything written about presupposition is challenged or contradicted by some authority on the subject” (Fawcett 1998, 114). In the next section, we will briefly review the literature on implicature and presupposition.

## Historical perspectives

### *Implicature*

The concept of implicature originates with H. P. Grice (Huang 2007, 23). The word, “implicature”, cognate of “implication” which indicates a “narrowly defined logical relationship between two propositions”, is derived from the verb, “imply” and refers to what is implicit in actual language use (Mey 2001, 99–100). Implicatures can be defined as what is conveyed minus what is said (Sandt 1988, 51). Two major types of implicatures exist: conventional and conversational implicatures (Thomas 1995, 57). Conventional implicatures “are non-truth-conditional elements of sentence-meaning” (Levinson 1983, 19). For example, the word, *manage* implies “trying (seriously)”, which is one of its conventional implicatures (Mey 2001, 28). Such conventional implicatures associated with certain words or structures are regarded as semantic presuppositions (Green 1996, 116–119; Marmaridou 2000, 138), and the words or structures are considered to be presupposition triggers (for more details, see Levinson 1983, 181–185). More discussion on semantic presupposition will be provided below.

Unlike conventional implicature, conversational implicature is generated in the context of conversations and it can be analysed according to Grice’s Cooperative Principle (CP). According to Grice, the CP expresses a set of unspoken guidelines for speaking that speakers observe under normal circumstances. The Cooperative Principle can be explicated in terms of the following maxims:

1. Quantity:
  - Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange.
  - Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
2. Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true.
  - Do not say what you believe to be false.
  - Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
3. Relation: Be relevant.
4. Manner: Be perspicuous.
  - Avoid obscurity of expression.
  - Avoid ambiguity.

- Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
- Be orderly.

(Grice 1975, 47)

When speakers deliberately flout a conversational maxim, a conversational implicature is conveyed. For instance, a normal response to the question “How did you like the lecturer?” would concern one’s feelings for or attitudes towards the lecturer as in “I liked him a lot” or “I didn’t like him”. If a speaker answers the question by saying “Well, I’m sure he was speaking English”, the response is not directly relevant to the question, as it does not mention whether or how much the speaker liked the lecturer. Such violation of the relevance maxim carries the conversational implicature that the lecturer’s speech was, for example, confusing or pointless. A possible explanation for indirectness of this kind may be considerations of politeness; the speaker may not want to directly say something negative about the lecturer.

Politeness, which concerns the consideration of others, is a basic guideline for human interaction. It is “a system of interpersonal relations” used to “facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange” (Lakoff, in Hickey 1998, 54). Leech (1983) proposes the following maxims of the Politeness Principle (PP):

1. Tact maxim: Minimize cost to other, maximize benefit to other;
2. Generosity maxim: Minimize benefit to self, maximize cost to self;
3. Approbation maxim: Minimize dispraise of other, maximize praise of other;
4. Modesty maxim: Minimize praise of self, maximize dispraise of self;
5. Agreement maxim: Minimize disagreement between self and other, maximize agreement between self and other;
6. Sympathy maxim: Minimize antipathy between self and other, maximize sympathy between self and other.

(Leech 1983, 131–133)

Taking into account a speaker’s potential consideration of benefit, praise, sympathy, and agreement in communication helps to explain and interpret conversational implicatures. In many cases, the reason why speakers violate the maxims of the CP is that they are trying to be polite and observe the maxims of the PP. In the above example, where the speaker answers the question “How did you like the lecturer?” by saying “Well, I’m sure he was speaking English”, the speaker tries to minimise dispraise of the lecturer and observe the approbation maxim, but violates the relevance maxim. All in all, it can be seen that while conventional implicature attaches to the semantic meaning of words or expressions, conversational implicature is generated by language in use in particular contexts which include speakers, speakers’ intentions and attitudes, and the circumstances surrounding the discourse. Thus, conversational implicature is related to pragmatic presupposition which will be illustrated in the following section.

### *Presupposition*

As noted in the previous section, implicatures are closely associated with presuppositions. Conventional implicatures and conversational implicatures are in fact types of semantic and pragmatic presuppositions respectively. In the field of linguistics, three major approaches to presupposition are identified: first, the semantic view considers presupposition to be a purely

logical phenomenon characterised in terms of truth and entailment; second, the pragmatic view considers presupposition to derive from speakers' and hearers' background knowledge and beliefs, and explains the phenomenon with reference to the conversational maxims under the Gricean CP and notions from speech act theory; third, there is a view according to which presupposition is an empty and misleading label covering a variety of fundamentally different phenomena (Sandt 1988, 10). The first and second understandings of presupposition will be treated as semantic and pragmatic perspectives on presupposition. The third view, which is partly formed in response to problems with the semantic and pragmatic perspectives on presuppositions to be discussed below, underlies the experiential approach which resorts to context to explain phenomena that others seek to explain in terms of presupposition.

The semantic approach to presupposition is centred on the concept of truth, which is conceived as the relation between sentences and the world in standard mathematical logic (Keenan 1998, 8). The fundamental commitment is that presupposition is inherent in linguistic objects like words and sentences, and contextual elements are left out of discussion (Sandt 1988, 13). According to this view, proposition P presupposes proposition Q if and only if Q is necessitated both by P and by the negation of P (Van Fraassen, as noted in Stalnaker 1998a, 61). In other words, semantic presuppositions are defined by a binary relation between sentences in terms of truth value: "A presupposes B if the truth of B is a condition for the semantic value of A to be true or false" (Beaver 2001, 8–9). For example, in the sentence, "The man in the blue coat left", the expression "the man in the blue coat" carries the presupposition that there existed a man who was wearing a blue coat. The truth of this presupposition is the precondition for the sentence to have a truth value. The negation of the sentence, "The man in the blue coat did not leave", also carries the presupposition that there existed such a man, and semantic presupposition can be identified via this negation test. In many cases, semantic presuppositions are regarded as instances of conventional implicatures associated with certain words or structures (See Oh and Dinneen 1979, 3, 11–15). In this sense, semantic presuppositions are more concerned with presupposition triggers which have their own connotations. For instance, the word *manage*, as mentioned above, is a presupposition trigger, giving rise to a presupposition that people have tried. Triggers cover many types of words or linguistic structures, and both the positive and the negative forms of sentences that contain such triggers have the same presupposition. For example, as just mentioned, definite descriptions such as [the + noun] can be triggers. Other examples include particles, such as *too*, *either*, *also*, *even*, and *only*. In addition, some factive verbs can also trigger semantic presuppositions, such as *forget*, *realise*, and *take into account* (for more information about presupposition triggers, see Cui (2013, 195), Levinson (1983, 181–185)). Although presupposition triggers are discussed here under semantic presuppositions, they may be investigated in terms of pragmatic presuppositions as well, for the linguistic triggers are also used in communicative situations. Presupposition triggers for semantic presuppositions are actually linguistic means whereby pragmatic presuppositions are induced.

Although the semantic approach is often considered to be "relevant to giving a rigorous theoretical explanation" of presupposition, pragmatic accounts are closer to the ordinary sense of presupposition (Keenan 1998, 17). The pragmatic approach takes into account various contextual factors and does not focus on truth conditions. Stalnaker (1998b, 21–23) holds that in the pragmatic approach presupposition can be understood in different ways depending on contexts and explained in terms of general assumptions in communication. In this sense, presupposition can be regarded as something the speaker assumes to be true prior to making an utterance. Although truth is also involved, it is not considered in a logic sense, but in the light of communicative purpose and context. The pragmatic approach to

presupposition mainly draws upon the theory of speech acts (see Austin 1962; Searle 1969), which concerns the felicity or appropriateness conditions of communication, and upon the theory of conversational implicatures (Marmaridou 2000, 136). With reference to felicity or appropriateness conditions, pragmatic presuppositions can be summarised as: “An utterance A pragmatically presupposes a proposition B iff A is appropriate only if B is mutually known by participants” (Levinson 1983, 205). The definition touches upon both properties of appropriateness, which reflects the relationship between an utterance and the relevant context, and mutual knowledge, which is shared by interlocutors about the world and the immediate situation. For instance, if a person who is illiterate asks a friend, “Could you read the letter for me”, the speaker presupposes the following: the friend can read, he is available, he is willing to help, and the speaker can trust him. In other words, it is speakers, not sentences, who have presuppositions (Yule 1996, 25; Stalnaker 1998a, 61). It can be seen that the pragmatic conception of presupposition sees it as a propositional attitude that speakers have to their utterances rather than as a semantic relation. In this sense, presupposition focuses on interlocutors and their assumptions about each other’s utterances, which can be analysed in relation to conversational implicatures (Green 1996, 116–119; Marmaridou 2000, 138; Oh and Dinneen 1979, 2–11). Presupposition related to conversational implicatures can be analysed according to the maxims of the CP and the PP as discussed above. In the example where the speaker answers the question “How did you like the lecturer?” by saying “Well, I’m sure he was speaking English”, the speaker has the following pragmatic presuppositions: the lecturer’s speech was confusing or pointless and it is impolite to dispraise the lecturer. Pragmatic presuppositions “not only concern knowledge, whether true or false: they concern expectations, desires, interests, claims, attitudes towards the world, fears etc.” (Caffi 1994, 3324, cited in Mey 2001, 186). Therefore, pragmatic presuppositions are located in a wider communicative setting covering such factors as speaker, hearer, context, belief, appropriateness, and mutual knowledge (Segeardahl 1996, 190). Accordingly, a ternary relation between two sentences and one context is established (Beaver 2001, 8–9).

To generalise, the semantic approach to presupposition is mainly concerned with logical relations between sentences, and the pragmatic approach to presupposition takes into account contextual factors. The difference between semantic and pragmatic approaches is related to the fundamental division between semantics and pragmatics. There are two major contrasts between the two fields: first, semantics is more concerned with the conventional meaning of language, while pragmatics pays more attention to language use or conversational implicatures; second, semantics focuses on the content of text, particularly truth conditions, while pragmatics considers the context, such as attitudes or interests of participants (Stalnaker 1998b, 28). These differences have led to different approaches to the study of presupposition, and although the two approaches are sometimes opposed, presupposition is both semantic and pragmatic in nature. Language use implies belief on the speaker’s part in the existence of referents, which is mainly a semantic issue; meanwhile, sentences are instruments used intentionally by participants who have beliefs and attitudes, which are mainly pragmatic issues (Green 1996, 112–113). As Sandt (1988, 26) expresses it, “a semantic presupposition of a sentence is a pragmatic presupposition of the users of the sentence”. In other words, a semantic presupposition of a proposition will be a pragmatic presupposition of the people in that context (Segeardahl 1996, 189). Actually, “[n]o text of any kind would be comprehensible without considerable shared context and background” (Tannen 2007, 37). Context is also essential for understanding presuppositions in Translation Studies. More discussion in this regard will be provided in the following section.

## Core issues and topics

The previous section has shown that implicature and presupposition are closely related concepts. In some approaches, implicatures have been seen as types of presuppositions, and exploration of presupposition can provide an expanded perspective on implicature. Both implicature and presupposition are relevant to translation and interpretation, as both concern the meaning of linguistic expressions and play a role in carrying semantic and pragmatic implications. For this reason, translators and interpreters are more likely to understand the meaning of their source texts and to produce an appropriate target text if they pay attention to implicature and presupposition when analysing the original text and when presenting the target text. However, while implicature and presupposition are relevant to translation and interpretation, conveying implicature and presupposition in translation and interpretation is not straightforward.

In the case of implicature, the translator and the interpreter can fall back on the lexical implications of words or expressions and the CP and PP. Any implicatures generated can be taken into account in the process of translation and interpretation and the target text can be formulated in such a way that similar implicatures are likely, in the translator's or interpreter's view, to be generated by the target text. However, considering that translation and interpretation involve linguistic, social, cultural, and even psychological factors, implicature is not easy to replicate, and there are more aspects that the translator and the interpreter need to consider than lexical meaning and communicative principles. When dealing with cultural gaps associated with certain words or expressions, the translator and the interpreter have to consider the reception by the target readers or audience and make adjustments or add explanations when necessary.

In the context of translation, presupposition is more complicated, as it requires identification of presupposition and of the part of presupposition that is most relevant to translation and interpretation. Presupposition is important for translation and interpretation because in order to be able to understand the original text and produce a translation or interpretation that is appropriate and has included all the original implications, it is essential for translators and interpreters to unpack the presuppositions connected with the original text. Yet exploration of presupposition in connection with translation and interpretation is rare. Generally speaking, the core issues for studying presupposition in translation and interpretation include the following. First, a systematic review of presupposition needs to be undertaken in order to identify what types of presuppositions have a bearing on translation and interpretation. We have briefly discussed semantic and pragmatic presuppositions above, and it is clear that the purely logical approach to presupposition cannot alone account for translation and interpretation, which take place in a context. The role that context plays in translation and interpretation and in connection with presupposition must be taken into consideration, both by theorists, so that new perspectives on presupposition in light of translation and interpretation can be explored, and by translation and interpreting practitioners who may draw on these insights during their decision-making. Finally, the functions of presupposition in translation and interpretation need to be investigated so that the translator and the interpreter can acquire a better understanding of their importance and application. In order to address these issues and explore the characteristics of presupposition that are especially applicable to translation and interpretation, we need to examine the key debates and issues in semantic and pragmatic studies of presupposition.

## Current debates

Before discussing presupposition and translation and interpretation, we need to introduce debates regarding presupposition in the field of linguistics, because these will shed light on

the importance of context. As noted above, presuppositions that are realised via linguistic triggers and which pass the negation test are usually regarded as semantic presuppositions. However, some presuppositions can be triggered by contextual conditions. Consider the following sentence: “If Mary gets this job, her salary will be very high” (Marmaridou 2000, 123). The presupposition underlying this sentence, that if people get the kind of job in question they will earn high salaries, is not triggered by linguistic expressions but by common sense. Such presuppositions are of a pragmatic nature. These two concepts of presupposition have been the topic of a great deal of debate.

There are some problems with presupposition for which neither the semantic approach nor the pragmatic approach can provide appropriate solutions. As mentioned above, semantic presuppositions have the property of remaining constant under negation; however, some presuppositions may in fact fail in certain contexts (Abbott 2006). For instance, in the sentence, “Jane cried before she left him”, the word, *before* presupposes that Jane actually left him, which is also related to the conventional implicature of the word *before* that something has happened earlier. By comparison, the sentence, “Jane dreamed that she was angry before she left him”, does not presuppose that Jane left him. Rather, it implies that she did not leave him, because if something is dreamed, it is not real. In other words, our knowledge about the implications of *dreamed* has cancelled the presupposition that she left him. Such sensitivity to background assumptions is not restricted to before-clauses, and it can be detected in many other linguistic structures or contextual situations (for further information about defeasibility of presuppositions, see Levinson 1983, 186–191; Marmaridou 2000, 125–127). In addition to the defeasibility problem, there is also the so-called projection problem, which concerns whether a presupposition of an embedded sentence can pass through and become a presupposition of the complex sentence. It was originally suggested that the set of presuppositions of a complex sentence is the simple sum of the presuppositions of the clauses of which it is composed. In other words, if  $S_0$  is a complex sentence containing sentences  $S_1, S_2, S_3, \dots, S_n$ , then the presuppositions of  $S_0 =$  the presupposition of  $S_1 +$  the presupposition of  $S_2 \dots +$  the presupposition of  $S_n$  (Levinson 1983; Soames 1998). However, this rule presents a number of compositional problems. For example, in the sentence, “Mary didn’t stop smoking cigars, because in fact she never started”, the trigger *stop* presupposes that Mary once smoked, but this cannot be transferred to the whole sentence, because the whole sentence makes it clear that Mary never smoked.

In summary, the defeasibility problem illustrates that there are cases where presupposition fails to be projected. Therefore, the defeasibility problems can be considered to boil down to the projection problem. While “any comprehensive theory of presupposition must resolve the projection problem” (Horn 1997, 307), neither the semantic nor the pragmatic approach can properly explain how and why presupposition fails to be projected. The projection of presupposition is essentially an issue of logic, and investigation of it is not directly relevant to translation and interpretation, which may involve analysis of logical relations and presentation of information in logical or comprehensible ways but is not merely a matter of pure truth-conditional calculation. We can see that presuppositions are cancellable or defeasible or fail to be projected whenever they are not compatible with people’s background assumptions about the world or specific communicative situations. In other words, presuppositions can be triggered by linguistic expressions, but they survive only when our knowledge about the world and the immediate context allows it. Such observations highlight the role context plays, and, indeed, it has been proposed that whenever a sentence presupposes something, it must be considered in a context entailing it (Heim 1992). When it comes to discourse analysis, a broader comprehension of text is closely connected with contextual knowledge (Sbisà 1999).



Translation and interpretation are even more closely related to context, for a proper transfer from one language and culture to another inevitably involves consideration of the original contextual conditions, the target readers, and the target context.

## Future directions

### *Introduction of context*

As mentioned above, the semantic approach has demonstrated that the tools of formal logic fail when confronted with the full range of natural language phenomena, and similarly the pragmatic approach has not provided satisfactory explanations concerning the projection problem either. Unlike semantic and pragmatic frameworks, the experiential approach abandons the algorithmic means and truth-conditional view of semantics (Fauconnier 1994); instead, it seeks to construct a framework where “our experience of and through language” may explain issues such as presupposition (Marmaridou 2000, 149). In other words, language use is considered in context, and various contextual factors are taken into account. The pragmatic approach to presupposition is also of a contextual nature, as it touches upon such aspects as background information and speakers’ intentions and attitudes; however, context is not specified in pragmatic explorations and the relationship between context and presupposition is not clarified.

In the experiential approach, sentences are regarded as mental spaces and presuppositions are thought to be moving between the spaces. The basic idea is that, as we talk and think, mental spaces are set up via space-builders, and get structured and linked under grammatical, contextual, and cultural conditions thus creating a network of spaces through which discourse unfolds (Fauconnier and Sweetser 1996). The term “space-builder” refers to such grammatical expressions as may establish a new space or refer back to one already set up. For example, in the sentence, “I believe it will be ok”, the word *believe* sets up the mental space, “my belief world”, which may or may not be the same as the real world. During the unfolding of a discourse, mental spaces are created via linguistic expressions. It is context that determines whether presuppositions in these spaces can be satisfied and inherited or projected from one space to another. For illustration, in the sentence, “Mary believes that it will not stop raining until tomorrow”, the trigger *stop* presupposes that it is raining. However, this presupposition is subject to a world made up of Mary’s beliefs. In this case, the presupposition is filtered. When it is the case that it is raining, the presupposition can pass through, for it goes from the real world to Mary’s belief world, which is less basic than the real one; however, if it is not raining, when this presupposition moves from the belief world to the real world, it will be blocked. In other words, whether the presupposition in this example can pass to the whole sentence is not determined in the space of Mary’s beliefs but by the real context. Thus, this experiential approach holds that contextual conditions in reality determine what kind of presuppositions there are and how such presuppositions can move.

To generalise, the mental space perspective offers an explanation of how presuppositions move between subordinate clauses and complex sentences. In the theoretical framework of mental spaces, the projection problem can be reworded as whether a presupposition in space M, which represents a part of a complex sentence, can be satisfied in parent space R, which is the whole sentence. Whether the presupposition in M can be projected to R depends on the context, and when the presupposition is in accord with the real contextual situation, it can be projected to the whole sentence. While it may be objected that the experiential explanations are subjective, subjectification is “closely related to our existing list of ways in

which information contextually migrates upwards in a space network” (Ferrari and Sweetser 2012, 55). Such analysis provides explanations of why presuppositions get blocked and under what conditions they are inherited. We can see that the projection of presupposition is essentially a matter of contextual compatibility. In other words, the experiential illustration of presupposition, which focuses on what is going on in people’s minds, is in nature a contextual one, and the movement of presuppositions is decided by context, although the factor of context is not explicitly discussed or given a great deal of overt emphasis.

### *Contextual presupposition in translation and interpretation*

So far we have reviewed three approaches to presupposition; the semantic, the pragmatic, and the experiential. The experiential approach addresses the projection problem and demonstrates the importance of including context in the exploration of presupposition, but the presupposition discussed is still semantic in nature. Therefore, there are two basic categories of presupposition: semantic presupposition that is based on logical relations, and pragmatic presupposition that is more concerned with speakers and the communicative situation.

The term “presupposition” is composed of two parts, “pre-” and “supposition”, and in ordinary language use, the word denotes anything we believe to be the case and relevant to an utterance we are about to make. Semantic presuppositions form only “a small proportion of the usages associated with the ordinary language term” and have the property of remaining constant under the negation test (Levinson 1983, 168). It has been observed that semantic presuppositions triggered by linguistic structures are unlikely to be affected in translation or interpretation, for linguistic items which give rise to semantic presuppositions are very similar in different languages, even when comparing various language groups (Levinson 1983, 216). For example, we can find equivalence regarding presupposition triggers between different language groups, such as English, a European language, and Chinese, a Sinitic language. To illustrate, the sentence, “She regretted going to Las Vegas”, is usually translated as “她后悔去了拉斯维加斯” (*ta hou hui qu le la si wei jia si*, She regretted going to Las Vegas) in Chinese. The trigger *regret* presupposes that something has been done, and the Chinese term used to translate it has the same triggering properties. Therefore, semantic presupposition is not regarded as focal in the field of Translation Studies. In addition, considering the nature of translation and interpretation, which involve various contextual factors, the purely logical or truth-value oriented nature of the semantic approach is not sufficient to account for them. However, as we will discuss below, semantic presuppositions can be useful tools to help the translator and the interpreter to package information.

While the pragmatic approach covers more than logic and truth value, and in this sense is more relevant to translation and interpretation, it has not identified a framework that can serve as a reference point for translators and interpreters. In fact, in connection with research on presupposition, it has been claimed that the elements of interest to Translation Studies are often “those which the linguists would like to put beyond the pale” (Fawcett 1998, 123). The practice of translation and interpretation takes place in a context, and the translator and the interpreter need to consider the reception of their works by the target readers or audience in the target context. The point of view of context as a source for presuppositions is also found in Givón (1989, 135–137), and such presuppositions are considered to be based on “contextual assumptions” (Levinson 1983, 167). Viewed from the contextual perspective, presupposition in the field of translation and interpretation can be regarded as translators’ and interpreters’ assumptions about the target context and the target readers or audience, especially their needs and expectations.

The identification of presuppositions can be difficult, for “even with the best of wills and the cleverest techniques, sometimes it is impossible to work out all the presuppositions in a text” (Mey 2001, 188). This is particularly the case with contextual presuppositions in translation. Context covers almost everything involved in communication, from the readers’ knowledge and social background to the co-text, and investigation of this is potentially endless, as there is always more to notice in terms of readers’ knowledge than has been discovered (Cui and Zhao 2014, 35). The framework for presupposition in translation established by Cui and Zhao (2014) specifies three categories of presuppositions related to translation, including needs analysis, the CP and PP for communication, and textualisation principles. Texts and their translations are intended to address readers’ needs. Translators have their own presuppositions about the target readers’ needs as well as about how these needs can be gratified, and it is against the background of such presuppositions that translators make decisions about how to design their translations. Communicative principles are means by which the various types of needs of others, such as the cognitive need to know and understand a text and the esteem need to win others’ respect and acceptance, can be satisfied. Although the CP has been developed with the analysis of spoken language in mind, it is also relevant to written language and therefore to translation (Fawcett 1997, 130). For Translation Studies, the CP can work as a general theory of the act of translation or “intercultural cooperation” and as an instruction to translators to act appropriately (Fawcett 1997, 130). Normally, text receivers have expectations about the amount of information they should be provided with, the quality of the information, and the manner in which the information should be presented. Correspondingly, writers or translators presuppose that the right amount of information should be given, the information should be true and relevant, and be presented in a clear, brief, and orderly manner, as receivers’ expectations need to be respected. Leech’s maxims of politeness are more flexible than the CP although participants in communications have expectations concerning benefit, cost, praise, dispraise, sympathy, and disagreement. Text producers or translators presuppose that listeners or text receivers should be provided with more benefit, less cost, more praise, less dispraise, less disagreement, and more sympathy. The third category of presuppositions is related to the textualisation of the first and second categories and involves the organisation of texts. There are four basic principles in textual rhetoric, namely the processibility principle, the clarity principle, the economy principle, and the expressibility principle. Processibility is the fundamental condition for readers to be able to read a text; clarity helps receivers to work out textual implications; being brief makes a text easier to remember; and expressibility enhances the text’s effectiveness and aesthetic value. Generally speaking, both text receivers and translators and interpreters expect that a text should be processible, clear, economical, and expressible.

While the framework outlined above is formulated with translation in mind, it also applies to interpretation, for, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, translation and interpretation both involve the analysis of the original text and transference between languages and cultures. To be more specific, in doing interpretation, the interpreter is supposed to be clear about the recipients’ needs in order to interpret in a way that meets their goals and purposes. Under normal circumstances, for both consecutive interpretation and simultaneous interpretation, the recipients need to acquire the information which the speaker is conveying in a timely and accurate fashion. In order to present the information properly and efficiently, the interpreter is expected to pay attention to the maxims of the CP and the PP, especially in such modes of consecutive interpretation as liaison interpretation where the interpreter works with the recipients face to face. The interpreter needs to respect recipients’ customs and values, and be flexible and make adjustments according to recipients’ reception

of the information and their reactions. The interpreter is a coordinator in the communication between the speaker and the recipients. If the recipients have difficulty understanding a subject matter, the interpreter should provide more explanation or ask the speaker for elaboration or clarification. The degree to which this is possible depends on the occasion – for example, an interpreter may not have much flexibility at a formal press conference; nevertheless, the interpreter has to keep the target recipients' needs in mind, and to present the interpretations with the target recipients' expectations in mind. As to the quality of interpretations, the principles of processibility, clarity, economy, and expressibility are particularly relevant. Recipients expect the interpretation to be processible, clear, and expressible, and the interpreter needs to be economical because there is always time pressure during interpretation. This is especially the case for simultaneous interpretation, where the interpreter is multitasking and does not have time to take notes and organise the text as consecutive interpreters do. The simultaneous interpreter is listening, thinking, and speaking at the same time, and the coherence of their interpretations is often at stake. Therefore, during simultaneous interpretation, the interpreter needs to pay special attention to ensuring that what they present is processible, clear, and expressible, and their wording needs to be economical and concise in order to save time and follow the speaker's pace.

### Implications for practice

The contextual presuppositions related to translation and interpretation as outlined above are of a semantic nature in that they relate to the organisation of a text as well as the presentation of semantic meaning such as the presuppositions about the processibility and clarity of a text. However, such semantic implications have nothing in common with what is studied in semantic presupposition, which is truth-conditional and based on logic. The semantic aspect of presupposition in connection with translation and interpretation is more concerned with the organisation of information in textualisation. In this sense, semantic presupposition and implicature are useful tools for translators and interpreters to use when analysing the implications of the original text and presenting information in an effective and efficient way. First, making a conscious effort to reveal the claims implied in the original text by analysing the semantic presuppositions and implicatures can help translators and interpreters to understand the original text; and complete and accurate comprehension is fundamental for translation and interpretation. Second, transferring some information in the form of semantic presuppositions or implicatures can make a text concise, because space can be saved when not all claims need to be expressed overtly. Third, textualising information in implied ways can increase a text's persuasion power. People make various inferences when reading or listening to a speech, and when some information is implied via semantic presuppositions or implicatures it leads to more receiver involvement and the recipients will reflect on and work out the implications. People's perception of what is asserted and what is implied in a text is an interesting issue, and as studies in psychology and psycholinguistics have shown, people tend to confuse implications and assertions when recalling a passage (Carroll 2004, 148–149; Cohen, Eysenck and Le Voi 1986, 41). If readers accept implications which are not expressly asserted, the persuasion of the text is enhanced, and this phenomenon is known as subliminal persuasion (Lakhani 2008, 152).

Like semantic presuppositions, pragmatic presuppositions are also often relevant to translation and interpretation. These involve various contextual factors such as the target readers' needs and expectations. Exploring such contextual presuppositions that the original

author may have about the text recipients can help the translator and the interpreter to grasp the author's or speaker's intentions and attitudes better, which can help guide their translation and interpretation choices. In addition, the presuppositions that translators and interpreters have about the target readers and context play an essential role in their decision-making process when they decide what information to provide and how to provide it. Such presuppositions cover a wide range of categories, for they involve almost anything that may be related to translation and interpretation, such as the general knowledge target recipients have and the information that is shared between translators and interpreters and target recipients. In carrying out the translation and interpretation activity, translators and interpreters must estimate to what extent the target readers are likely to share their presuppositions, which is "a difficult judgement to make and involves a delicate balancing act" (Fawcett 1997, 125). In most cases, translators and interpreters have to rely on their own intuition or impressionistic judgement. However, since the presuppositions translators and interpreters have influence their decision-making and therefore the translations and interpretations that they produce, exploring such presuppositions can help to explain various issues in translation and interpretation. Therefore the presupposition perspective is also relevant to research on translation and interpretation.

It is possible to argue that there are three major types of research models in Translation Studies: comparative models aim to explore language-pair translation guidelines or language-system contrasts; process models focus on cognitive factors influencing the process of translation; and causal models explore why translations are produced in the way they are (Saldanha and O'Brien 2014, 6). The investigation of contextual presuppositions can shed light on the processes and causes of translation and interpretation and can therefore be applied in the process and causal models of research. One of the major challenges is that it is difficult to be exhaustive in identifying such presuppositions, as noted above. What we have said about the contextual presuppositions that are thought to be relevant to translation and interpretation is mainly pertinent to presuppositions that can serve as a general framework for the investigation of translation and interpretation, and further analysis and discussion is required in contexts involving different languages and cultures. Despite the possible universality of presuppositions about people's needs, communicative principles, and textualisation, there are likely to be cultural nuances and differences, the investigation of which will be invaluable for explaining why adjustment is often made in translation and interpretation.

### Further reading

Ahmed, M. and Shazali, M. 2011. Presupposition as a pragmatic inference toward a new conceptualization of the term. *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 2(7), pp. 63–68.

This study explores the pragmatic inference of presupposition as an external and cultural linguistic item which can always help extend the discourse analysis of interlocutors.

Baker, M. 2006. Contextualization in translator- and interpreter-mediated events. *Journal of Pragmatics* 38, pp. 321–337.

This article explores context and contextualisation in translation and interpreting. It proposes that contextualisation in both translation and interpretation can reveal the goals and ideological positioning of participants.

Cui, Y. and Zhao, Y. 2014. "Mediation of Cultural Images in Translation of Advertisements: Alterations and Cultural Presuppositions". In *Media and Translation: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, edited by D. Abend-David, 315–334. London: Continuum.

This chapter focuses on the translation of advertising in newspapers and magazines and aims to investigate the reasons for such mediation from the perspective of presupposition. It discusses semantic and pragmatic presupposition in the light of advertisement translation.

Haugh, M. 2007. The co-constitution of politeness implicature in conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics* 39, pp. 84–110.

This article studies politeness and implicature, two key concepts in the field of pragmatics, and explores the notion of politeness implicature.

McNally, L. 2013. Semantics and pragmatics. *WIREs Cognitive Science* 4, pp. 285–297.

This article analyses the major distinctions between semantics and pragmatics, such as context-invariant versus context-dependent content, truth-conditional versus non-truth-conditional content, language-centred versus speaker-centred perspectives on meaning, and proposes the integration of the two.

## Related topics

Semantics and translation; Relevance Theory, interpreting and translation.

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