

Presuppositions in Jim Gaffigan's jokes on "30 Minutes of Jim Gaffigan's: Quality Time" on the Dynamics Comedy YouTube channel

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the use of presuppositions and implied meanings that create jokes in Jim Gaffigan's stand-up comedy show, "30 Minutes of Jim Gaffigan: Quality Time - Stand Up Comedy," uploaded to the *Comedy Dynamics* YouTube channel. This study uses a qualitative method. The data analyzed are Jim Gaffigan's jokes that contain presuppositions. The results show that there are 23 data points containing presuppositions in Jim Gaffigan's jokes, categorized into 7 existential presuppositions, 5 non-factive presuppositions, 4 lexical presuppositions, 4 counterfactual presuppositions, 2 factive presuppositions, and 1 structural presupposition. Based on the study result, the presupposition that is often used in Jim Gaffigan's jokes is existential presupposition. In conclusion, presupposition not only functions as a communication tool but also as a means to foster social connections through laughter. The impact of using presupposition in comedy is that it creates a quick connection between the comedian and the audience, thus strengthening the effectiveness of the joke. Choosing the right type of presupposition, such as existential, can make it easier for the comedian to deliver accessible humor, while the use of an inappropriate presupposition, such as structural, can reduce the humorous effect as it requires more time to think.

Keywords: jokes; pragmatics; presuppositions; stand-up comedy

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INTRODUCTION

Language is essential for socializing. Language can also create jokes to entertain others. In comedy, language reveals deeper truths and entertains. For instance, a comedian at a stand-up comedy show on various platforms on social media can create jokes with a factual and absurd style of language so that many people know the comedian from his jokes. This phenomenon proves that language can build connections, even in virtual spaces.

In addition, language as a tool of communication can make it easier for humans to achieve common meaning, exchange information, ideas, and feelings. Every conversation provides an opportunity for individuals to understand each other and exchange experiences. However, not all utterances can be understood directly, some may have implied meanings. This phenomenon highlight

that language not only serves as an explicit means of communication but also serves as a medium rich in implicit meanings. Therefore, to truly understand what a speaker is saying, we must pay attention not only to what he or she is saying but also to the context in which the utterance is delivered. To better understand the implied meaning of a word, it is important to interpret pragmatics first. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is the study of the meanings conveyed by speakers and understood by listeners (Sapara et al., 2022). Understanding the intent of a speaker's speech means understanding that what is said is not necessarily what is intended. For example, a speaker uses sarcasm or irony when speaking, but these words have a different meaning from what he said. This means that the listener cannot always immediately understand the speaker's intent.

More broadly, language also functions as a powerful means to create entertainment, for example, through jokes in stand-up comedy. Joking is an essential communication skill in human interaction (Chen et al., 2024). According to KBBI (Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), a joke is an expression that aims to make others laugh or feel happy, it can be a light-hearted joke, a clever quip, or a silly story that invites laughter (Putri et al., 2024). Jokes play a crucial role in social interactions as a bridge to bring individuals closer together and create a warm atmosphere. According to Tarigan (2015) a joke is a conversation that can elicit laughter (Putri et al., 2024). This joke often occurs in every conversation, one of which is in the conversation between comedians and their audience in stand-up comedy performances. Comedians not only use language as a tool to make jokes but also to make ordinary stories more intriguing. In performance art, comedians use their wit and storytelling skills to turn ordinary events into funny and laughable events.

Stand-up comedy joke often uses language that is not entirely explicit, so the audience is expected to capture meanings that are not directly expressed. In pragmatics, this phenomenon is known as presupposition. Generally, presuppositions are usually information that the listener already knows. But when a speaker inserts surprising new information into the presupposition, it can provoke a humorous reaction because the statement goes against the listener's expectations (Kristiawan, 2018). For example, when a comedian says, "I will never let my dog ride a motorcycle again", this statement contains the assumption that his dog has ridden a motorcycle before. This is new information that sounds highly implausible. This situation generates humor because it contradicts reality, while the listener knows that it is absolutely impossible for a dog to ride a motorcycle.

As previously mentioned, pragmatics is not only concerned with how a sentence is understood but also with the implied meaning of the speaker (Sapara et al., 2022). Yule (1996) also highlights the concept of implicature, which allows additional meaning to be conveyed through indirect means of communication or implied meaning. Any comedian will surely admit that they often use communication language that has implied meanings. In the world of stand-up comedy, implied meaning is one way to create a joke that is not only humorous but also thought-provoking.

The communication that often occurs between a comedian and the audience at a stand-up comedy show allows the emergence of presupposition and implied meaning. Researchers chose to examine presupposition and implied meaning in stand-up comedy videos because it provides insight to understand how human communication operates beyond simple words, but has a much deeper meaning. This topic is rarely discussed in everyday life. The research object used is the joke produced by Jim Gaffigan in the stand-up comedy video entitled "*30 Minutes Of Jim Gaffigan: Quality Time – Stand Up Comedy*" uploaded on YouTube on May 3, 2024. Jim Gaffigan, whose real name is James Christopher Gaffigan, is an American comedian, writer, actor, and producer. Gaffigan was named "*The King of (Clean) Comedy*" by *The Wall Street Journal* in 2013 because he never uses satirical or offensive comedic language (Affandi, 2020). Gaffigan has released five specials in six years, and his new show on Prime Video is the best of them all. The reason researchers chose the utterances of Gaffigan's joke in stand-up comedy video as research objects is that the joke used is interesting and relevant to current joke trends and also often describes everyday topics such as family, food, and modern habits, where many people are looking for joke trends that are relatable, light, but manage to convey social criticism in an entertaining way. In addition, this object is also still rarely used by previous researchers, so researchers are interested in raising this object in their research.

In this study, researchers considered several previous studies. The previous studies focused on similar topics and different objects with this study, such as those conducted by [Khalili \(2017\)](#), [Habiburrohman \(2024\)](#), [Mujahidah \(2023\)](#), and [AS Syifa \(2021\)](#). The first study observed by [Khalili \(2017\)](#) focuses on classifying the types of presuppositions and analyzing their meanings. The data used are utterances in the novel *Heart of Darkness*. The second research was then observed by [Habiburrohman \(2024\)](#). This research discusses the types of presuppositions and examines the relationship between presuppositions and observing conversational maxims in interviews. The data used are utterances in interviews with Andrew Ross Sorkin and Elon Musk. The third research was conducted by [Mujahidah \(2023\)](#), which discusses the types of presuppositions phenomena contained in the *Brave* movie script. The data used is the speech of the characters in the script. The fourth study was researched by [AS Syifa \(2021\)](#), who analyzed presupposition with the research object of Joe Russo's interview about the interview 'Avengers: End Game' interview on Google's YouTube channel. The data used are Joe Russo's utterances that contain presuppositions. The difference between previous research and this research is the object used. The first study used the object of utterances in novels, the second study and the fourth study used utterances in interviews, the third study used utterances in movies, and this study used utterances in jokes. The researcher chose the utterances in jokes because they were rarely used by previous researchers. Based on the description above, the researcher chose the research title: "Presupposition in Jim Gaffigan's Jokes on "30 Minutes of Jim Gaffigan's: Quality Time" on *Dynamics Comedy* YouTube Channel".

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pragmatics

Pragmatics can generally be defined as the study of how language is used in a particular context, focusing on the speaker's point of view and the impact of language on the emotions and attitudes of the listener ([Ishihara & Cohen, 2010](#)). According to [Yule \(1996\)](#), pragmatics is a field of linguistics that studies the meaning of communication, which involves how speakers and listeners interact and how words affect the understanding of meaning ([Khater et al., 2024](#)). In addition to paying attention to the words spoken, it is also necessary to pay attention to the context or situation in which the conversation takes place ([Khater et al., 2024](#)). This can help to understand the meaning conveyed by the speaker ([Khaerunnisa, 2024](#)). Simply put, the pragmatics approach focuses on how meaning is interpreted in a particular context where the context affects what is expressed ([Khasanah et al., 2021](#)). All these factors can affect the way an utterance is delivered and received. [Yule \(1996\)](#) also says that pragmatics is the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms.

Presupposition

According to [Yule \(1996\)](#), presupposition is something that speakers assume to be true before uttering a statement. This relates to assumptions that are not explicitly expressed but are still conveyed in communication. According to [Huang \(2014\)](#), a presupposition is an inference or proposition that is considered true in a communication context. The information contained in the presupposition is often implicit and becomes shared knowledge between speakers and listeners. Meanwhile, according to [Levinson \(Fitriani & Johan, 2023\)](#) argues that presupposition is a common ground that is considered reasonable by all parties in verbal interaction. From the three experts, this study uses [Yule's \(1996\)](#) presupposition theory because this theory is relevant to the phenomena and problems discussed and has been widely applied in previous studies. [Yule \(1996\)](#) identifies that presupposition is categorized into six types, i.e., existential presupposition, lexical presupposition, factive presupposition, non-factive presupposition, structural presupposition, and counterfactual presupposition.

Some previous studies have analyzed research with a similar topic, presupposition. According to [Khalili \(2017\)](#) and [Mujahidah \(2023\)](#), presupposition refers to how one can describe the thought process in analyzing different aspects of meaning that are not immediately apparent. In other words, it describes how listeners can capture additional information along with their interpretations. This means that the thinking process is related to assumptions. According to [Habiburrohman \(2024\)](#), these

assumptions are also called presupposition. The definition of presupposition provides an understanding that it is the speaker, not the sentence that has presuppositions. These assumptions will become accepted propositions, so the utterance needs to be understood and accounted for to make sense, using specific lexical elements or grammatical features (As Syifa, 2021).

Existential presupposition

Existential presupposition is a concept in linguistics that focuses on assumptions about the existence of entities, or persons (Yule, 1996). For example, Adel's car (>> Adel has a car). It can be stated that existential presupposition generally uses nouns as topics. According to Maier (2015), the use of a person's name, or a person's name generally does not introduce a new topic in the conversation but rather refers to a topic that is already known by the participants. Therefore, we can see people's names as a form of presupposition triggering. For example, when someone calls out "Ahmed", it can be assumed that the person whose name is Ahmed does exist.

Lexical presupposition

There are several forms that can be considered as sources of lexical presupposition. Generally, when using a word with a certain meaning, there is another meaning that is assumed to be understood even though it is not directly expressed. For example, when someone says "successfully" to an interlocutor, the presupposed meaning is that the interlocutor has succeeded in achieving something or the target itself. Similarly, when someone says "unsuccessful" to an interlocutor, then the person is emphasizing the interlocutor's unsuccessfulness. However, it should be noted in both cases, that there is a presupposition that does not directly explain the meaning that the person has 'tried' to do something. Other examples involving lexical elements are 'start', 'again', and 'stop'. An example is a statement: "Ahmed stopped smoking" (>> Ahmed used to smoke).

Factive presupposition

Some words are used that assume that what comes after them is related to facts. Such as the words 'regret', 'realize', and 'know', have the same criteria, and are considered to be true facts. Example in a statement: "We regret telling him" (>> I told him) (Yule, 1996).

Non-factive presupposition

This type of presupposition applies when the previously assumed meaning is incorrect. This meaning is expressed with words like 'imagination', 'dream', and 'pretend'. Examples in statements are as follows: "She pretends to be rich" (>> she is not rich)

Structural presupposition

Structural presupposition is usually characterized by a WH-question, meaning a presupposition that forms a regular sentence structure and contains a presupposition about the truth of a sentence. This tense involves shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener about what is being said. "When did he travel to Europe?" (>> he traveled)

Counterfactual presupposition

Counterfactual presupposition means that something that is thought to be true is actually false, even contrary to reality. An example is a conditional sentence which is often called a counterfactual conditional. An example of a counterfactual presupposition sentence is usually an assumption that states that information with the initial word "if" is not true. An example is the following statement: "If she knew the answer, she would have told us" (>> She doesn't know the answer)

Joke

Joke in pragmatics itself is one type of language that deviates from language rules and principles in conversation. Joke is an important communication skill in human interaction. A joke, as used in the

KBBI, is an expression that aims to make others laugh or feel happy, it can be a light-hearted joke, a clever quip, or a silly story that invites laughter (Putri et al., 2024). Jokes serve a great function in social interactions as a bridge to bring individuals closer together and create a warm atmosphere. According to Tarigan, a joke is a conversation that can make fun or joke as a laugh (Putri et al., 2024). This joke often occurs in every conversation, one of which is in the conversation between comedians and their audience in stand-up comedy performances.

Implied meaning

According to Yule (1996) implied meaning relates to meaning that is not always expressed directly in communication. Yule (1996) also explains in his book about pragmatics, namely how the interpretation of meaning is influenced by context and situation. Implied meaning is created when a speaker expects the listener to be able to understand a meaning that is not explicitly said, without having to tell them directly. This often involves inference, where the listener must have prior information to interpret what is actually intended, and this will minimize misunderstandings. Presuppositions examine previously made assumptions as the meaning implied in the speaker's utterance (Mujahidah, 2023). For example, when someone says, "Could you please turn on the fan?", in the middle of the day. The implied meaning here is that the person feels hot and wants to turn on the fan, not just to ask for help.

This study found the implied meanings produced in Jim Gaffigan's stand-up comedy video uploaded on YouTube on May 3, 2024. For example, when Gaffigan uses existential presuppositions in his joke, he assumes that the audience already has certain knowledge regarding the entity of the object mentioned by the speaker, which allows the implied meaning behind the statement to emerge. Therefore, the presupposition not only provides context for the audience but also opens up a wider space for interpretation. This shows that it is as crucial to understand the presupposition in Gaffigan's utterances as it is to capture the implied meaning that gives birth to a joke. Thus, the two complement each other and form an interesting joke. The purpose of the jokes used by the speechwriter is to spice up the humor and make it more interesting and entertaining (Putri et al., 2024).

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze data in the form of utterances in jokes used by Jim Gaffigan in stand-up comedy videos uploaded on YouTube. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research is a procedure that produces descriptive data, typically in the form of words or utterances rather than numbers, making it particularly suited to examine the meaning of non-numerical data such as utterances in jokes. The purpose of using this approach is to understand the phenomenon in its natural context (Niam et al., 2024). In this approach, the data collected in qualitative research methods are in the form of text, sound, speech, images, or other non-numerical data and are analyzed using an inductive approach (Niam et al., 2024). This means that the researcher must first collect data, and then from the data, understanding and conclusions will emerge. So, the researcher does not start his research with hypotheses or conjectures but focuses on finding new understandings from the data collected.

In this research, researchers used data in the form of a joke used by Jim Gaffigan in a stand-up comedy video entitled "30 Minutes of Jim Gaffigan: Quality Time Stand-Up Comedy" which was uploaded on the *Comedy Dynamics* YouTube channel on May 3, 2024. With a video duration of 30 minutes and 36 seconds when this data was taken, likes reached 9.3k, has also been watched by 681k people. The video of Jim Gaffigan's stand-up comedy performance can be accessed at the following YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/SauY7wVzInk?si=zKcZWU3z-QV3cyc>

Data were collected systematically through several stages. The first step is to watch the video of Jim Gaffigan's stand-up comedy performance, the second step is to convert the video into a transcript, then the third step is to read the transcript, and the last step is to mark the parts that contain the types of presumptions.

The process of analyzing the data that has been collected in this research is carried out through several stages. First, the data from Jim Gaffigan's video transcripts will be identified to find the parts

that contain presuppositions. Second, the data will be categorized based on the types of presuppositions used, such as existential, lexical, active, non-active, structural, and counterfactual presuppositions according to Yule (1996). The third stage is to analyze the implied meaning contained in the types of presupposition in Jim Gaffigan's jokes. Fourth, the researcher will re-examine the results of the analysis to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings. Fifth, the researcher draws conclusions based on the results of the analysis to answer the research questions and connects the findings with relevant theories.

FINDINGS

In this study, the data used are Jim Gaffigan's utterances that contain jokes in his stand-up comedy performances. The researcher aims to analyze the types of presuppositions and how the meaning implied in these types of presuppositions can produce jokes. Based on the results of the research, it can be confirmed that there are six types of presuppositions found, namely, existential, lexical, factual, structural, non-factual, and counterfactual. The following are the details in the table.

Table 1

Amount and percentage of presuppositions in jokes used by Jim Gaffigan

Types of Presupposition	Amount	%
Existential	7	31%
Lexical	4	17%
Factive	2	9%
Non-factive	5	22%
Structural	1	4%
Counterfactual	4	7%
Total	23	100%

Table 1 presents the results of the data analysis conducted by the researcher. The researcher has found six types or kinds of presuppositions with a total of 23 jokes containing presuppositions. This corroborates the opinion in Yule's (1996) theory which states that presupposition has six types, each presupposition researcher found 7 existential presuppositions, 4 lexical presuppositions, 2 factive presuppositions, 5 non-factive presuppositions, 1 structural presupposition, and 4 counterfactual presuppositions. The most frequently used types of presupposition in Gaffigan jokes can be seen from the number and percentage level. In the table, the highest order is existential presupposition at 31%, followed by non-factive presupposition at 22%, lexical presupposition at 17%, factive at 9%, counterfactual 7%, and the lowest is structural presupposition at 4%. So, the most frequently used type of presupposition is existential presupposition with the highest percentage among the others. The following is an explanation of each data.

a. *Existential presupposition*

Datum 1:

"The untucked shirt, the fat man's last rod" (00:00:23)

This utterance contains existential presupposition because of the existence of an untucked shirt and fat man. This is consistent with Yule (1996) theory of existential presupposition, which is an assumption about the existence of entities, or people. This utterance invites laughter from the audience, because before saying this joke Gaffigan glances at his fat body first, with an expressionless face. Gaffigan assumes that the audience knows that shirts tucked into pants are often associated with an ideal body, by mentioning the shirt that was left out, Gaffigan is satirizing himself in a funny and relatable way.

Datum 2:

"The untucked shirt, it's like the male Wonderbra. There's a surprise underneath and you're not going to like it." (00:00:53)

This utterance contains existential presupposition because of the existence of the male wonder-bra. This remark drew laughter from the audience because Gaffigan equated the untucked shirt with the male wonder bra, which in the untucked shirt just like in the male wonder bra both hides something but still stands out. It also has something in it that is shocking, and people won't like. Gaffigan assumes that the audience knows that shirts tucked into pants are often associated with an ideal body. By mentioning shirts that are left out, Gaffigan is satirizing himself in a funny and relatable way.

Datum 3:

*"Like, even when I tell **my children** not to lie, I'm kind of lying to **them**"* (00:04:41)

It is an existential presupposition. The utterance assumes that Gaffigan has children, the noun phrase "*my children*" tells the audience that Gaffigan has children, without having to be told explicitly. So, the word "them" assumes that Gaffigan has not just one child but several. And the existence of these children is true. This utterance became funny because of the mismatch between expectations and reality, where parents are supposed to be role models for their children to tell the truth, but Gaffigan lied to his son, even though he lied for good. Gaffigan's way of speaking is very precise when delivering the utterance so that it creates a joke, and makes the audience laugh.

Datum 4:

*"I was watching with **my wife** on our anniversary."* (00:07:15)

It is an existential presupposition. The speech assumes that Gaffigan has a wife, the noun phrase "*my wife*" tells the audience that Gaffigan has a wife, without having to be told explicitly. It was funny because Gaffigan had previously told the audience that he watched Dateline on his wife's anniversary. The show was about a husband who killed his wife, with a funny expression when delivering the speech, the audience laughed.

Datum 5:

*"**The horse** is always named like, **Viagra** is revenge."* (00:10:13)

This utterance contains an existential presupposition that implies that there is some kind of relationship between the name of the horse and the concept of "*Viagra*" which is connected to the theme of revenge. This assumption shows that the listener already has knowledge about horses and Viagra and the context in which the name is used. This means that horses exist, and Viagra does exist. This joke arises because of the unexpectedness, where the name of the horse with "*Viagra*" and "*revenge*" can be related to the brand of medicine, especially in the context of revenge. With a related expression of Gaffigan when delivering the speech, the audience laughed.

Datum 6:

*"They show **a picture of the winning horse** on the news."* (00:10:23)

The utterance contains an existential presupposition that there is a horse that won the race, and its photo was featured in the news. The existence of this winning horse is assumed to be true. Jim assumes that the audience will not know what the differences are in the photos of the horses shown, the joke exaggerates the audience's ignorance of horses to an unreasonable degree. Thus, making the audience laugh.

Datum 7:

*"I'm just reddit, I thought it was **Anne Frank house**."*

This utterance contains an existential supposition that there is a place called Anne Frank House. The existence of this place is assumed to be true and the audience is aware of its existence. The sentence became funny because Gaffigan's assumption about the place was wrong, where Gaffigan thought that the Anne Frank House was a relaxing place, but it turned out to be a historical place like a museum. Gaffigan's signature delivery and funny expressions added to the laughter sensation for the audience.

b. Lexical presupposition

Datum 1:

"I don't know what happened. All I did was eat abusively for 40 years and suddenly I'm fat." (00:03:06)

This utterance contains lexical presupposition because the utterance *"I don't know what happened"* indicates that something happened before. This utterance contains a lexical presupposition, as the utterance *"I am fat"* indicates that Gaffigan used to be fat. This is consistent with Yule's (1996) theory of lexical presupposition. This joke implies Gaffigan's confusion. He doesn't know what happened to make him fat, even though he mentioned that he has only been overeating for 40 years. This made many audience members laugh because what Gaffigan expected was contrary to reality. Gaffigan hoped that after 40 years of overeating, she would still have an ideal body. But he did not.

Datum 2:

"I'm a terrific husband" (00:08:45)

It assumes that there is a certain standard for being a *"terrific husband"* and that many people may not meet that standard. By saying *"I'm a terrific husband,"* Jim is implying that he has never done anything bad to his wife before. It was funny because Gaffigan had previously recounted a *"Dateline"* episode about a bad husband killing his wife. He stated that after seeing the incident, he felt very proud that he passed as a great husband because he never planned to kill his wife. In fact, being a great husband is not seen in whether the husband kills his wife or not. The joke managed to make the audience laugh.

Datum 3:

"Mostly they just want someone to stop whipping them." (00:11:32)

This sentence contains lexical presupposition through the use of the word *"stop"*, the utterance *"Stop whipping"* assumes that the act of whipping has been done before. The utterance is funny because it initially gives a serious impression, as if it is about humans who are always being whipped and want to be treated better. However, the context changes completely after realizing that it's a horse, creating a surprise that provokes laughter.

Datum 4:

"But the bear was far away. So I took out my phone and I started taking pictures and then suddenly the bear stood up, roared, and looked right at me. Started creeping towards me, tilting his head back and forth." (00:18:07)

Gaffigan's utterance above contains a lexical presupposition because the sentence *"I started taking pictures"* shows that there is a picture-taking activity that has just been done when Jim Gaffigan visited Alaska and saw a bear 500 yards away. Implicitly, the word *"started"* carries the assumption that this activity had not previously been done when Jim Gaffigan was in Alaska, coupled with the sentence *"I took my phone"* which indicates that Jim Gaffigan just took out his cellphone to take photos of the bear.

Then the sentence "*Started creeping towards me, tilting his head back and forth*" implies that previously the act of "*creeping*" had not been done by a bear, and when Gaffigan wanted to take a picture the bear began to crawl, as if he wanted to approach Gaffigan.

Gaffigan's line "*I started taking pictures*" is not funny because the act of taking pictures is common, especially in rare sightings such as seeing a bear. It only serves as a set-up, preparing the audience for a funnier punchline in the next sentence, as he continues his story. "*Started creeping towards me, tilting his head back and forth.*" This surprise made the audience laugh because they didn't expect a tense situation to come. It implied that Gaffigan was more concerned about getting a good photo than his safety, coupled with Gaffigan's fitting delivery.

c. *Factive presupposition*

Datum 1:

"I mean, she wasn't thrilled I was taking note." (00:07:30)

The sentence "*she wasn't thrilled*" in the utterance above assumes that the utterance comes after the fact 'I was taking notes', meaning whether or not his wife likes Gaffigan's actions, the fact is that Gaffigan has taken notes. This is consistent with Yule's (1996) theory of factive presupposition.

In the utterance above, Gaffigan recounts himself watching the show "*Dateline*" on his anniversary day with his wife, the show contains husbands who kill their wives, he takes notes on the details of these cases, and his wife is not happy with his actions. The incident is very silly and shows a very unusual event because Gaffigan is more interested in the show "*Dateline*" than in celebrating his anniversary, thus creating a joke that can be understood by the audience.

Datum 2:

"She didn't appreciate the dishonesty." (00:08:32)

The utterance "*he doesn't appreciate dishonesty*" uses the word "*appreciate*," which assumes factually that there is actually dishonesty occurring. This means that whether she appreciates it or not, the dishonesty is still a fact.

It creates a joke because it contains irony. Gaffigan relates that there was a woman who reported her fiancé's crime not because of his murder but because of her dishonesty about his past. The audience understood what Gaffigan assumed about the joke, which made the audience laugh.

d. *Non-factive presupposition*

Datum 1:

"You wouldn't like this ice cream, it's very spicy" (00:05:08)

The utterance contains a non-active presumption because it implies a lie to a child. Gaffigan said that someone must have lied to a child, such as saying that you won't like this ice cream, it is very spicy. The statement that ice cream is spicy does not correspond to the fact that ice cream is sweet; it is just a phrase to discourage the little boy from eating ice cream. This is consistent with Yule's (1996) theory of non-factive presupposition.

The remark is funny to the audience because the incongruity between the ice cream and its spicy taste is an expression that is clearly not factual, the audience knows that ice cream tastes sweet, and there is nothing spicy about it. This led to the joke.

Datum 2:

"Mostly they just want someone to stop whipping them, because they're horses."
(00:11:30)

This sentence contains a non-factive presupposition because it assumes that the wish to stop whipping the horse is an interpretation of the speaker rather than a fact that can be verified by the horse itself, as the horse cannot express its wishes literally.

The sentence was a joke that gave the horse human traits, in that the horse could not express its wishes in a literal way like humans. This made the audience laugh.

Datum 3:

"I was pretending like I enjoyed being outside." (00:17:25)

The utterance contains a non-factive presupposition because the verb "*pretending*" is part of a non-factive verb. It means "*I was pretending like I enjoyed being outside*", something that is considered untrue or not a fact, because the speaker does not actually enjoy being outside, he is just pretending.

The speech hangs a joke in which Gaffigan states that while he is in beautiful Alaska, he pretends to enjoy the time outdoors, which suggests that he is not actually enjoying the experience. This creates a contrast between what he shows and what he feels, which is often a source of humor in comedy. Gaffigan's fitting delivery made the audience laugh.

Datum 4:

"The doctor was like, we have to remove your appendix. And I was like, both of them? Luckily, he thought I was kidding. He is like 'HAHAHA'". (00:21:03)

The utterance contains a non-factive presupposition because there is the verb "*thought*", which means that the clause after "*I was kidding*" is not a fact. In this context, when the doctor said that he would remove Gaffigan's appendix, then Gaffigan asked, "*both of them?*" Gaffigan really did not know, and wasn't kidding, but the doctor thought he was kidding because medically, there is only one appendix.

The humor in this Jim Gaffigan joke arises from a deliberate misunderstanding that contradicts reality. When Gaffigan says, "*Both of them?*" the doctor thinks he is just pretending not to know that humans only have one appendix, which is clearly contrary to medical fact. Then Gaffigan was happy that the doctor just thought he was kidding, when in fact he really didn't know that there is only one appendix. The audience laughed as he portrayed himself as ridiculous.

Datum 5:

"I'm just reddit, I thought it was Anne Frank house." (00:29:07)

The utterance "*I'm just reddit, I thought it was Anne Frank house.*" contains a non-factive presupposition because there is the word "*thought*" which indicates that the previous belief is wrong, or not true. Gaffigan's speech highlights a misunderstanding, Gaffigan thought Anne Frank House was a place for leisure activities, such as snacking on hotdogs, but in fact it was not. Anne Frank House turns out to be a historical place like a museum. The joke arises from the discrepancy between Gaffigan's expectations of the Anne Frank House. Gaffigan's relaxed demeanor and the way he plays with the audience's expectations provoke laughter from the audience.

e. Structural presupposition

Datum 1:

"I mean, she wasn't thrilled I was taking note. What are you writing down?" (00:07:30)

The utterance contains a structural presupposition because it implicitly assumes that the activity of writing is being done, without having to ask further questions. Question structures like '*what*' assume that an action has already taken place. So, the question comes after an event has occurred. This is consistent with Yule's (1996) theory of structural presupposition.

The joke refers to Gaffigan watching "*Dateline*" with his wife on their anniversary, a show about a husband who killed his wife, and Gaffigan writing down the details of the case, and his wife asking, "*What are you writing down?*" with a displeased expression. It was the incongruity between the romantic moment and the show he was watching that sparked the joke.

f. Counterfactual presupposition

Datum 1:

"If you saw me eat, you would think there were multiple movies." (00:00:09)

It is a counterfactual presupposition because the phrase "*If you saw me eat*" implies that the audience did not see Gaffigan eating, which is a hypothetical situation. The assumption is followed by a result that also did not actually happen "*you would think there were multiple movies.*" The fact is that no one was watching Gaffigan eat, so no one would think that there were multiple movies. This is consistent with Yule's (1996) theory of counterfactual presupposition.

The utterance is funny because Gaffigan is using a joke to put himself down, by saying "*if you saw me eat, you would think there were multiple movies*", he is mocking himself as a fat person who loves to eat, with multiple movies, thus making many viewers laugh. The joke that used was in the form of overstatement (Kristiawan, 2018).

Datum 2:

"If you watch Dateline, it seems like most marriages end in murder." (00:06:43)

Gaffigan's speech contains a counterfactual presupposition. Gaffigan assumes that if someone watches "*Dateline*", there will probably be many marriages that end tragically, because the show contains a husband who kills his wife. The utterance does not reflect reality, due to the fact that Gaffigan also watched the show on his anniversary.

The speech became a joke because of the contradictory actions such as a positive marriage being connected to a show about a husband killing his wife. When contradictory things are combined, the result becomes funny because of the absurdity of the situation, even though this is not the case in reality. Gaffigan then delivered this joke with a relaxed delivery and the right expressions that made the audience laugh.

Datum 3:

"If they could show us pictures of any horse, we wouldn't know the difference."
(00:10:24)

In Gaffigan's utterance "*If they could show us pictures of any horse,*" it can be assumed that the condition does not occur in reality because there is the word 'if conditional. Then the next assumption is "*we wouldn't know the difference.*" Even though Gaffigan was not given pictures of any horse, he knew the difference.

This is funny because Gaffigan is making fun of himself by inviting the audience into his jokes by exaggerating the fact that pictures of horses seem to look all the same to people who are unfamiliar with horses, even though each horse has its own name and character, when only seen from photos there seems to be no difference. It is common knowledge to the audience that we often do not care about trivial things, plus Gaffigan uses the right expression when expressing the sentence.

Datum 4:

"Even if they're injured, they're like, I'll walk it off" (00:17:10)

The utterance "*Even if they're injured, they're like, I'll walk it off*" contains a counterfactual Presupposition because it contradicts the facts. The fact is that an injured horse, especially a serious

injury is unlikely to “*walk it off*” like a human. This idea is an imagination that contradicts the fact that horse injuries require significant medical treatment, unlike humans there is a recovery period, whereas horses may not be saved.

The speech becomes a joke because a horse is given human traits, namely stubbornness or stoicism in the face of injury as in the phrase “*I’ll walk it off*”, like an athlete who tries to “*ignore*” the pain, coupled with Gaffigan’s funny expression and delivery.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that Gaffigan predominantly uses existential presuppositions in his jokes. This aligns with his distinctive style of humor, which relies heavily on common cultural references and everyday experiences that can be easily recognized by his audience. By presupposing the existence of concepts like fast food, lifestyle, or family situations, he creates an immediate connection with the audience, without the need for re-explaining the context. These existential presuppositions are well-suited to observational comedy, where the humor lies in the audience’s recognition of familiar truths from their own lives.

In contrast, structural presuppositions are used less frequently in Gaffigan’s jokes, as they often require more complex sentence structures and prompt the audience to infer meaning from specific syntactic patterns. This can slow down the flow of the joke, which goes against Gaffigan’s fast-paced, light, and to-the-point style. By avoiding structural inferences, he ensures that the audience doesn’t overthink the sentence, keeping the punchline effective and memorable.

Previous research related to this theory, according to [Yule \(1996\)](#) as compiled by [Khalili \(2017\)](#) analyzed the presuppositions used in the movie *Heart of Darkness*. In this research, the most dominant type of presupposition was found to be structural presupposition, while the least dominant was non-active presupposition. This was because many utterances contained information already known to the audience, and most of the conversations were expressed in the form of WH-questions.

Similarly, in [Habiburrohman \(2024\)](#) research, which analyzes presuppositions and their relation to conversational maxims, it was found that existential presupposition was the most dominant, while counterfactual presupposition appeared the least. This was due to the serious atmosphere of the interview, where imaginative language and suppositions that trigger counterfactual presuppositions were rarely used.

In [Mujahidah \(2023\)](#) research on the presupposition phenomenon in the *Brave* film script, existential presuppositions were also found to be the most dominant, with nonfactual presuppositions being the least used. This is because existential presuppositions emphasize the existence of entities and objects in the story world, which are vital for building a plot and character. Nonfactual presuppositions, on the other hand, are more speculative and less relevant to a concrete narrative.

Finally, in [AS Syifa \(2021\)](#) research, which analyzed presuppositions in Joe Russo’s interview about *Avengers: Endgame* on Google’s YouTube channel, the most dominant type of presupposition was found to be factive presupposition, while non-factive presupposition appeared the least. This is similar to [Habiburrohman’s \(2024\)](#) research, as the serious context of the interview rarely utilized humorous or joke-related words.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that Jim Gaffigan frequently uses existential presuppositions in his stand-up comedy to create humor that is relatable and immediately understood by his audience. By assuming that the audience shares the same knowledge as the speaker, Gaffigan can make statements that feel familiar, such as jokes about food or daily habits, without needing to provide additional explanations. This technique helps to create a sense of closeness and invites laughter from the audience.

This study offers valuable insights into how presupposition and implied meaning in Gaffigan’s jokes strengthen communication and social relationships. By understanding the humor techniques

employed, this research can serve as a valuable reference in linguistic studies and English language teaching. However, the limitation of the data—focusing solely on one comedian—may reduce the variation in humor observed. Furthermore, the subjective nature of the analysis and the specific cultural context may limit the broader applicability of the findings. The qualitative approach used in this study also makes generalization of the results difficult, leaving room for further exploration in future research.

Future research could explore presuppositions in comedic contexts from different cultures or examine other types of media, such as jokes in movies on platforms like Netflix, WeTV, or television series. This would provide deeper insights into how language and context come together to create humor.

In conclusion, the researchers hope that this study contributes meaningfully to the field of language studies, particularly in pragmatics and comedy. It is also expected to pave the way for future research that is more comprehensive and diverse.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT:

The authors of the manuscript affirm that they have no conflicting interests.

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