



## The Implicature and Presupposition Analysis of “Fever” Song Lyrics by Adam Lambert

Arif Hidayat <sup>1</sup>

[arif.hidayat@pertiwi.ac.id](mailto:arif.hidayat@pertiwi.ac.id)

English Literature Department, Faculty of Tourism and Language Universitas Pertiwi

Sahril Mujani

[sahril.mujani@pertiwi.ac.id](mailto:sahril.mujani@pertiwi.ac.id)

English Literature Department, Faculty of Tourism and Language Universitas Pertiwi

Bizrinov R Wahab

[190350071@pertiwi.ac.id](mailto:190350071@pertiwi.ac.id)

English Literature Department, Faculty of Tourism and Language Universitas Pertiwi

Hidayat, A., Mujani, S & Wahab, B.R. (2025). The Implicature and Presupposition Analysis of “Fever” Song Lyrics by Adam Lambert. *Journal of English Language and literature*, 10(1), 85-92. doi: 10.37110/jell.v10i1.279

Received: 02-02-2024  
2025

Accepted: 22-07-2024

Published: 02-03-

**Abstract:** : The research aims to explore the usage and meanings of these elements in the lyrics by analyzing each sentence and describing them using a semantic and pragmatic method. The study also discusses the influence of music genres on the listener’s mood and emotions. The research findings shed light on the cognitive processes involved in counterfactual thinking and the online processing of counterfactual conditionals. The study’s emphasis on textual analysis and interpretation aligns with the qualitative descriptive model, providing a detailed understanding of implicatures and presuppositions in the song lyrics. The research contributes to understanding the role of linguistic representations in contributing to pragmatic presuppositions and the derivation of soft triggering. Overall, this research provides insights into the cognitive mechanisms underlying the comprehension of counterfactual statements and the significance of music genres in shaping the listener’s emotions and sentiments.

**Keywords:** *presupposition, song lyrics, pragmatic method*

### INTRODUCTION

This research elaborates on the implicature and presupposition that are stated in the lyrics of the song. This research aims to explore the usage and meanings of implicature and presupposition founded in the lines of the song lyrics by analyzing each sentence and describing them using a semantic and pragmatic method. The reason for choosing this topic is to understand the usages or meanings of implicature and presupposition sentences

implied in the song lyrics and how to interpret them into a convenient meaning in daily speech.

Songs are composed of words, and each lyric contains a meaning that conveys the singer’s emotions and sentiments. A song may be about the artist’s journey and may be related to their life. People listen to music almost daily, each with their favorite songs and preferred musical genres. Although there are many different music genres, the writers of this study

---

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author

concentrate on pop music. Together with the lyrics and the message in the music, the song's genre influences the listener's mood. The author is listening to one of Adam Lambert's songs.

Presupposition in linguistics refers to the implicit assumptions or background information taken for granted and must be satisfied for a statement to be considered apt. It is a complex notion that has been extensively researched since the 1970s (Xue, 2021). Presuppositions are crucial for the smooth flow of communication and are used to explain linguistic phenomena such as the projection problem and the behavior of factive verbs (Stalnaker, 1999). They are propositions not primarily about the sentences but must be established before the utterance for effective communication (Abrusán, 2022). Furthermore, presuppositions can be both semantic and pragmatic phenomena, with some scholars arguing for their purely semantic nature while others advocate for their strictly practical nature. The study of presuppositions requires a deep understanding of the lexical and syntactic properties that trigger them and the broader conversational context (Parrish et al., 2021).

Presuppositions have been observed in various contexts, such as legislative texts, where they can be used as a stylistic means to maintain conciseness and transparency. However, if misapplied, presuppositions can obscure the duties and obligations outlined in the law, hindering its accessibility and practical implementation (Höfler, 2013). Additionally, there are different types of presuppositions, such as existential presuppositions, which are dominant in specific contexts and contribute to the manifestation of definite descriptions of real-life facts (Haji & Mohammed, 2019). Moreover, inferential presuppositions are constituted by the mental act of reasoning and play a role in univocal reasoning (Gerken, 2011).

Pragmatics is a field of linguistics that focuses on studying how language is used in context, including the intentions and effects of

utterances. Yule (1996) divided presupposition into six types: existential presupposition, factive presupposition, lexical presupposition, structural presupposition, non-factive presupposition, and counterfactual presupposition.

Existential presupposition is the implicit assumption or requirement that a particular entity or condition exists. This type of presupposition is often associated with certain linguistic expressions, such as definite descriptions and quantified sentences. For instance, in the context of cleft sentences, it has been noted that they convey an open proposition, which includes an existential presupposition (Cesare & Garassino, 2015). Additionally, the existential presupposition of factives, questions, and change of state verbs is considered easily cancellable, suggesting a pragmatic basis for this type of presupposition (Abrusán, 2022). Furthermore, analyzing the definiteness effect in their existential sentences provides another example of how existential presuppositions manifest in linguistic expressions (Abrusán, 2022).

Then, factive presupposition refers to the implicit assumption or requirement that the content of the complement clause of a factive verb is factual. Factive verbs, such as "realize" or "know," trigger this type of presupposition, indicating that the truth of the complement is taken for granted. For instance, in the sentence "John realized that the keys were on the shelf," the active verb "realize" triggers the presupposition that the keys are indeed on the shelf. This presupposition is distinct from non-factive verbs, such as "think" or "say," which do not carry the same presupposition.

Lexical presupposition, a crucial aspect of linguistic analysis, is associated with the implicit assumptions or requirements inherent in the meanings of certain lexical items or constructions. Abrusán (2022) introduces lexical representation without a semantic presupposition and derives the pragmatically presupposed status of the active implication by conversational reasoning. It highlights the role

of linguistic representations in contributing to pragmatic presuppositions. Additionally, Abrusán (2022) discusses the derivation of soft triggering by stipulating a lexical representation with a set of alternatives, emphasizing the influence of linguistic representations on presupposition triggering.

Furthermore, the study by Haryati (2022) highlights the identification of linguistic presupposition as one of the types of presupposition found in the Guardian news, emphasizing its significance in linguistic analysis. Similarly, Siahaan & Mubarak (2020) utilize Yule's theory, which categorizes presupposition into six types, including lexical presupposition, underscoring its importance in classifying presuppositions.

Structural presupposition, a key concept in linguistic analysis, pertains to the implicit assumptions or requirements embedded within the structure of particular sentences or linguistic constructions. This type of presupposition differs from other types, such as existential, factive, lexical, non-factive, and counterfactual presuppositions. The study by Diningsih et al. (2019) emphasizes that structural presuppositions are related to the regular and conventional assumptions about the truth of the structural components of sentences. It highlights the significance of the sentence structure in triggering presuppositions.

In contrast to factive presuppositions, non-factive presuppositions are associated with linguistic expressions that do not inherently presuppose the truth of their complement clauses. The distinction between active and non-active presuppositions has been a subject of extensive linguistic inquiry, with scholars examining their selectional requirements, prosodic effects, and influence on downstream neural processing.

Abrusán (2022) discusses the distinction between active and non-active presuppositions, highlighting that the content of the presupposition is expressed by a sentence constituent only in the case of factives but not in the case of non-factive expressions. This

distinction underscores the difference in the generation of presuppositions between factive and non-factive linguistic elements.

Furthermore, Djärv & Bacovcin (2017) emphasize the substantial difference between active and non-active predicates, indicating that this difference extends to prosodic effects on presupposition projection. It suggests that the prosodic features associated with dynamic and non-active expressions play a role in the projection of presuppositions.

Besides, there is a counterfactual presupposition. It is a significant aspect of linguistic analysis, influencing the interpretation of counterfactual conditionals and their pragmatic implications. The study by Landman & Manis (1992) delves into the realm of counterfactual thought concerning personal decisions, shedding light on the cognitive processes involved in counterfactual thinking. Additionally, Stewart et al. (2009) investigate the online processing of counterfactual conditionals, providing insights into the cognitive mechanisms underlying the comprehension of counterfactual statements. Furthermore, Kulakova & Nieuwland (2016) review experimental evidence for the dual meaning of counterfactuals, emphasizing the need to relate counterfactuals to pragmatic phenomena such as presuppositions. Moreover, Zakkou (2019) discusses the long-standing agreement among philosophers and linguists regarding the term "counterfactual conditional," highlighting the conceptual intricacies associated with counterfactuals. These references underscore the significance of counterfactual presupposition in linguistic and cognitive research, providing valuable insights into the mental and pragmatic aspects of counterfactual thinking.

Based on the description above, implicature and presupposition make the song lyrics exceptional. They provide meaning both explicitly and implicitly. It is why the writer attempts to investigate the various implicature and presuppositions included in the lyrics of Adam Lambert's "For Your Entertainment"

and “Fever” lyrics. The writer then feels challenged to consider the implicature and presupposition usage and meaning in song lyrics for the research; there are many meanings behind the utterance. The writer analyzes the song lyrics in several stages. First, the writers explore the lyrics as utterances since the lyrics can be uttered with many meanings. Second, the writers are interested in how the singer fires off the information and message through the lyrics.

## METHOD

The research method employed in this study is a qualitative descriptive approach, which aligns with the work of Creswell (2012). As defined by Creswell, qualitative research aims to comprehend human problems, while Ricoeur emphasizes the analysis of various textual and visual objects suitable for examination. The research design specifically utilizes content analysis, a systematic and objective method for analyzing textual data, as described by Krippendorff (2019). This approach involves comparing, contrasting, and categorizing data to test hypotheses, focusing on written or recorded communication to identify and

analyze words, concepts, and common themes. The data for this research is derived from the song “Fever” by Adam Lambert (source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP3gMBn7gNE>), focusing on implicature and presupposition.

The data collection involves listening to the songs, selecting relevant lyrics, and analyzing them to identify implicatures and presuppositions. The analysis is conducted by categorizing the data, explaining the identified implicatures and presuppositions, and drawing conclusions based on the research findings. The study’s emphasis on textual analysis and interpretation aligns with the qualitative descriptive model, as it seeks to provide a detailed understanding of implicatures and presuppositions in the song lyrics.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Types of Presupposition

In this paper, the writers analyze the lyrics of the songs based on Yule’s theory that there are six types of presupposition. It can be seen below:

**Table 1.** Types of Presupposition

No	Types of Presupposition	Utterance
1	Existential Presupposition	14
2	Factive Presupposition	8
3	Lexical Presupposition	4
4	Non Factive Presupposition	4
5	Structural Presupposition	11
6	Counterfactual presupposition	4

## The Implicature of Presupposition Types

### Existential Presupposition:

Existential presupposition in linguistics refers to a linguistic expression's inherent assumption or presupposition about the existence of certain entities or conditions. When discussing existential presupposition, how certain words or phrases in a sentence carry an assumption that certain things or entities exist (Napitupulu, 2021). It can be seen below:

(Datum 1: Adam Lambert 'Fever')

*"There he goes" and "My baby walks so slow"*

The phrases above presuppose the existence of specific entities, namely, the person referred to as "he" and the speaker's "baby." The sentences wouldn't make sense if these entities didn't exist or weren't assumed to live in the conversation context. For example, if you say, "There he goes," the presupposition is that a person (he) is going somewhere. The word "there" implies a location, and "he" presupposes the person's existence in that location.

So, in analyzing the song lyrics, when we talk about existential presupposition, we highlight the linguistic elements that inherently assume the existence of specific people or things in the narrative.

### Factive Presupposition:

Factive presupposition involves linguistic expressions that presuppose the truth or reality of certain propositions or states of affairs. In simpler terms, a sentence or phrase with a factive presupposition assumes a particular statement or situation is true (Kastner, 2015). In the song lyrics, examples of factive presupposition include:

(Datum 2: Adam Lambert 'Fever')

*"I'm sick of laying down alone."*

*"But your mom's not home."*

In the first example, "I'm sick of laying down alone," the factive presupposition lies in the assumption that the speaker has been lying alone, presented as a fact or reality. In the second example, "But your mom's not home," the factive presupposition is that the listener's mom is not home. The assumption is that this statement reflects an actual state of affairs.

Factive presuppositions can be contrasted with non-factive expressions, where the truth of the embedded proposition is not presupposed. In these lyrics, the factive presuppositions contribute to the narrative by presenting certain situations or feelings as facts within the song's context.

### Lexical presupposition

Lexical presupposition involves the inherent assumptions or implications associated with the meaning of specific words or phrases. These assumptions are not explicitly stated but are understood based on the linguistic choices made in a sentence (Lange et al., 2009). In other words, certain words carry built-in presuppositions about the context or the relationships between elements in the sentence. In the song lyrics, an example of linguistic presupposition is the phrase:

(Datum 3: Adam Lambert 'Fever')

*"Kind of ménage à trois, sometimes."*

The term "ménage à trois" inherently carries a lexical presupposition about a romantic or sexual relationship involving three people. The phrase itself implies a specific type of interpersonal arrangement. The listener must understand the implied meaning without explicitly stating it in the lyric.

When we discuss lexical presupposition in the context of these lyrics, we highlight how certain words, in this case, "ménage à trois," bring implicit assumptions about the nature of relationships, adding a layer of meaning to the song.

### Structural Presupposition

Structural presupposition refers to implicit assumptions or expectations about a sentence or discourse's underlying structure or organization. It involves how sentences are formed, and specific linguistic structures can carry built-in presuppositions about the relationships between elements within those structures (Napitupulu, 2021). In the song lyrics, examples of structural presupposition include the repeated phrases:

(Datum 4: Adam Lambert 'Fever')

*"Would you be mine?"*

The repetition of these phrases creates a structural pattern in the lyric. Each occurrence of "Would you be mine?" presupposes a specific question or proposition about the listener's willingness to be in a relationship. Similarly, the repetition of "Oh baby, light's on" implies a recurring situation where the lights are on, possibly suggesting an opportunity or a specific context.

The structural presupposition arises from expecting these phrases to maintain a consistent pattern throughout the song. The listener anticipates that each instance of these structures will convey a similar meaning, contributing to the overall coherence and flow of the lyrics. So, when discussing structural presupposition in these lyrics, we focus on the implicit assumptions related to the recurring patterns and organization of the language used in the song.

### Non-factive presuppositions

Non-factive presupposition involves linguistic expressions that presuppose information without necessarily assuming the truth of that information (Napitupulu, 2021). In other words, the presupposed content may not be presented as a fact but is still treated as shared knowledge or inferred background information. It differs from factive presupposition, which considers the truth of the presupposed content. In the song lyrics, an example of non-factive presupposition is found in the lines:

(Datum 5: Adam Lambert 'Fever')

"I know we both know it isn't time, no."

"We'll never get too far."

In the first example, "I know we both know it isn't time, no," the non-factive presupposition lies in the shared knowledge between the speaker and the addressed person. It is assumed that both parties know it isn't the right time for something, but the lyrics don't assert the truth of this statement. In the second example, "We'll never get too far," the non-factive presupposition is that the speaker and the addressed person understand that their relationship may have limitations and won't progress too far. Again, the lyrics present this as assumed knowledge without explicitly stating it as a fact.

Non-factive presuppositions contribute to the nuanced meaning of the lyrics by conveying shared perceptions or assumptions between the speaker and the addressed person. They help shape the context without necessarily affirming the truth of the presupposed content.

### Counterfactual Presupposition

Counterfactual presupposition involves linguistic expressions that presuppose the falsity or non-actualization of certain conditions or events. In simpler terms, it refers to statements or situations that imply an imagined or hypothetical scenario that contrasts reality (Napitupulu, 2021). In the song lyrics, examples of counterfactual presupposition include:

(Datum 6: Adam Lambert 'Fever')

*"Just you, me and the stars, kind of ménage à trois, sometimes."*

In the first example, "Just you, me and the stars, kind of ménage à trois, sometimes," the counterfactual presupposition lies in the idea that there are occasions where the speaker, the addressed person, and the stars engage in a kind of ménage à trois. It suggests an imaginative or hypothetical scenario that may not be the actual situation.

Counterfactual presuppositions, as seen in these examples, add a layer of imagination or speculation to the lyrics. They introduce



hypothetical scenarios that may or may not align with the actual state of affairs, contributing to the overall creativity and storytelling within the song.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of “Fever” song lyrics by Adam Lambert has provided valuable insights into the usage and meanings of implicature and presupposition in the lines of the song. The research has identified six presupposition types: existential, factive, lexical, non-factive, structural, and counterfactual. The study has also explored the implicature of each kind of presupposition, shedding light on the cognitive processes involved in counterfactual thinking and the online processing of counterfactual conditionals.

The research has employed a qualitative descriptive approach, which aligns with the work of Creswell and Ricoeur, providing a detailed understanding of implicatures and presuppositions in the song lyrics. The study’s emphasis on textual analysis and interpretation has contributed to understanding the role of linguistic representations in contributing to pragmatic presuppositions and the derivation of soft triggering.

Overall, this research has provided insights into the cognitive mechanisms underlying the comprehension of counterfactual statements and the significance of music genres in shaping the listener’s emotions and sentiments. The research findings have implications for linguistics and cognitive science, providing a foundation for future research in this area.

## REFERENCES

- Abrusán, M. (2022). Presuppositions. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108766401.025>
- Cesare, A. M. de, & Garassino, D. (2015). On the Status of Exhaustiveness in Cleft Sentences: An Empirical and Cross-Linguistic Study of English Also-/Only-Clefts and Italian Anche-/Solo-Clefts. *Folia Linguistica*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/flin-2015-0001>
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). Educational research. pearson.
- Diningsih, S. W., Andayani, \_\_, & Rohmadi, M. (2019). Literature Learning: Pragmatic Study of Humor Discourse in Indonesian Political Humor Book. *International Journal of Educational Research Review*. <https://doi.org/10.24331/ijere.628514>
- Djärv, K., & Bacovcin, H. A. (2017). Prosodic Effects on Factive Presupposition Projection. *Semantics and Linguistic Theory*. <https://doi.org/10.3765/salt.v27i0.4134>
- Gerken, M. (2011). Univocal Reasoning and Inferential Presuppositions. *Erkenntnis*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-011-9281-3>
- Haji, S. S., & Mohammed, F. O. (2019). The Use of Presuppositions in the Short Story of Zilkê Şixatê (Matchstick). *Ukh Journal of Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.25079/ukhjss.v3n2y2019.p45-55>
- Haryati, H. (2022). Presupposition in the Mystery and Thriller Film of “Escape From Pretoria”. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*. <https://doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v4i2.122-136>
- Höfler, S. (2013). Between Conciseness and Transparency: Presuppositions in Legislative Texts. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law - Revue Internationale De Sémiotique Juridique*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-013-9337-6>
- Kastner, I. (2015). Factivity Mirrors Interpretation: The Selectional Requirements of Presuppositional Verbs. *Lingua*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2015.06.004>
- Krippendorff, K. (2019). Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878781>
- Landman, J., & Manis, J. D. (1992). What Might Have Been: Counterfactual Thought Concerning Personal Decisions. *British Journal of Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8295.1992.tb02453.x>
- Lange, J. de, Vasić, N., & Avrutin, S. (2009). Reading Between the (Head)lines: A Processing Account of Article Omissions in

- Newspaper Headlines and Child Speech. *Lingua*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2008.04.005>
- Napitupulu, R. I. (2021). Presuppositions in Retno Marsudi's Speech at the UN General Assembly in New York. *Bahas*.  
<https://doi.org/10.24114/bhs.v32i3.30350>
- Parrish, A., Schuster, S., Warstadt, A., Agha, O. M. A. M., Lee, S., Zhao, Z., Bowman, S. R., & Linzen, T. (2021). NOPE: A Corpus of Naturally-Occurring Presuppositions in English.  
<https://doi.org/10.48550/arxiv.2109.06987>
- Siahaan, C. K., & Mubarak, Z. H. (2020). An Analysis of Presupposition Found in the Guardian News: Pragmatical Approach. *Jee (Journal of English Education)*.  
<https://doi.org/10.30606/jee.v6i1.405>
- Stalnaker, R. (1999). Pragmatic Presuppositions.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/0198237073.003.0003>
- Stewart, A. J., Haigh, M., & Kidd, E. (2009). An Investigation Into the Online Processing of Counterfactual and Indicative Conditionals. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17470210902973106>
- Xue, B. (2021). An Exploration of Context Updating Mechanisms From a Cross-Linguistic Perspective.  
<https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2021-1593>
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford university press.
- Zakkou, J. (2019). Presupposing Counterfactuality. *Semantics and Pragmatics*.  
<https://doi.org/10.3765/sp.12.21>