

ARTICLE

## Proper Names as Presupposition Triggers in the Horror Story: Semantic and Functional Aspects

*Hanna Kolosova, Inna Borkovska, Kateryna Tuliakova\*, Yuliia Kornytska, Iryna Kozubska, Svitlana Volkova*

*Department of ELH, Faculty of Linguistic, National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute", Kyiv 03056, Ukraine*

### ABSTRACT

This study is devoted to analysing the presupposition of proper names, which is interpreted as a guess or implicit assumption in the semantic and functional aspects in the context of the horror genre, in particular, the story "The Lurking Fear" by Howard Phillips Lovecraft. The purpose of the article is to identify the trigger functions of proper names in this genre and classify the dependence of the presupposition level on the background knowledge of the author and the reader. This dependence is divided into "Perfect match", "Total mismatch" and "Partial match". Interpreting different types of presuppositional dependencies and understanding their trigger functions allows us to identify when the impact on the reader is most intense and when it decreases. In our study, we consider the gradual projection of presupposition, taking into account the functioning of epistemic presupposition, which can manifest its meaning even through a single word, regardless of the context. We explore trigger functions such as predicting information based on the presence or absence of background knowledge and providing information through discourse referents. Awareness of all the processes of launching a presupposition through individual lexical units is intended to increase the impact on the reader and provoke the maximum approximation of the recipient's interpretation of information to the author's intention. Further research can extend the analysis to other Lovecraft's works, focusing on the horror genre, to get a more complete picture of the use of presupposition in these contexts.

**Keywords:** Proper names; The horror genre; Onomasticon; Presupposition; Projection; Trigger

#### \*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Kateryna Tuliakova, Department of ELH, Faculty of Linguistic, National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute", Kyiv 03056, Ukraine; Email: [tuliakova.kateryna@gmail.com](mailto:tuliakova.kateryna@gmail.com)

#### ARTICLE INFO

Received: 11 April 2024 | Revised: 10 May 2024 | Accepted: 23 May 2024 | Published Online: 20 July 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i3.6638>

#### CITATION

Kolosova H., Borkoska I., Tuliakova K., Kornytska Y., et al., 2024. Proper Names as Presupposition Triggers in the Horror Story: Semantic and Functional Aspects. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*. 6(3): 746–760. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i3.6638>

#### COPYRIGHT

Copyright © 2024 by the author(s). Published by Bilingual Publishing Group. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Relevance

The growing interest in horror stories determines the relevance of our research. The significance of proper names in horrors for our study lies in their ability to operate as triggers that can project presuppositions inside and outside context. This paper critically examines presupposition, an implicit assumption in which speakers identify information as self-evident and not as part of the main propositional content of a speech act. At the intuitive level, a presupposition is a certain guess for the truth conditions, which is sufficient for a total or partial understanding of the meaning of what was said, for the delivery of thought through the joint efforts of communicators when expressing and perceiving information

The purpose of this study is to analyze the perspectives on presupposition as a phenomenon of a semantic, pragmatic, or dynamic nature in the context of the horror genre story “The Lurking Fear” by Howard Phillips Lovecraft. It is also necessary to pay attention to the fact that presuppositions are considered in our work, while acknowledging the existence of formal-logical interferences, which are essentially logical consequences. In the case of formal-logical interferences, the incorrect expression leads to incorrect consequences (Martynyuk, 2011). That is, the presupposition is preserved when changes are made to the statement’s context, and the logical consequence loses this ability. While semantic presuppositions focus more on the consequences of what is said, pragmatic presuppositions always emphasize the roles of the speaker and the receiver of information. Understanding the level of development and commonality of background knowledge between the author (speaker) and the reader (listener) is very important and requires not only the presence of a similar understanding of a certain topic but also approximately the same level of perception and interpretation of information with subsequent conclusions that will be oriented towards one result.

In our study, we consider the actualization of a presupposition in an utterance via the functioning of

certain triggers. A trigger can be an individual lexical element or a certain grammatical construction that is responsible for the presupposition, provoking its projection. Stephen C. Levinson (1983) began compiling the list of presupposition triggers and Lauri Karttunen (1991) expanded it. This list includes various groups of presuppositions, ranging from definite descriptions to possessive constructions.

We identify proper names (hereinafter PNs) as triggers that can project presuppositions, considering whether it is possible to cancel the presupposition of a certain PN. An onomasticon represents a list or collection of PNs (Collins Dictionary, 2024). Definitions of PN by different scientists share common elements while also presenting nuanced differences in emphasis. For instance, Yan Huang (2014) highlights the designation of a unique entity in a given context for the speaker, without relying on the conventional meaning of the noun. This definition points out the context-dependent nature of PN and its independence from linguistic conventions. Willy Van Langendonck (2007) focuses on the ability of PN to denote a unique entity and enable its identification among other possible referents. This definition underscores the role of PN in establishing references and facilitating differentiation from other entities. Richard Coates (2006) describes PN as noun phrases used deictically to identify individuals or particulars, functioning as overt conventional labels. Coates’ definition highlights the deictic nature of PN and their role as conventional labels assigned to specific individuals. John Anderson (2007) defines PN as a noun phrase primarily tasked with assigning reference, achieved through linguistic convention. Anderson’s definition emphasizes the function of PN in establishing references through conventional linguistic practices. Regardless of the variety in the definitions emphasis on context dependency, reference establishment, deictic usage, and reliance on linguistic convention, all of them converge on the idea of proper names as noun phrases denoting unique entities.

We have chosen Howard Phillips Lovecraft’s “The Lurking Fear” as a rich source of material for the inquiry. Lovecraft adeptly employs proper names to

evoke and intensify the horror atmosphere within the narrative. By using unusual and mystically imbued names for characters and locales, Lovecraft effectively immerses the reader in a realm of moral degradation and existential estrangement. Notably, the allocation of proper names in “The Lurking Fear” transcends mere atmospheric embellishment; rather, it serves to delineate specific role functions within the narrative framework. Investigating this aspect illuminates the nuanced interplay between nomenclature and narrative dynamics, elucidating the intricacies of plot progression and character interrelations. Furthermore, proper names assume significance as potent triggers of presupposition, engendering a perception of pre-existing entities endowed with distinct attributes and contextual significance. Consequently, these names exert a profound influence on the reader’s cognitive processes, evoking anticipatory schemas and shaping narrative expectations.

First and foremost, we take into account the concept of pragmatic presupposition and the emphasis on the roles of the speaker (in our case, the writer) and the reader. Horror involves conveying a certain atmosphere that should frighten or create unpleasant sensations. In our research, we will analyze how PN, being a trigger, can provoke the presupposition of horror – and in this case, the personality of the writer and the level of influence of what he said on the reader plays an important role. To do this, we will examine the level of dependence of the presupposition on the background knowledge of the author and the reader, interpreting it in three variants: “perfect match” dependence, “total mismatch” dependence, and “partial match” dependence. “Triggering” of a certain presupposition through PNs implies the highlighting of a functional aspect, which in our work is described due to the derivation of the main functions of PNs in the role of triggers. The use of PNs as presupposition triggers is an important tool for enhancing the effect of the atmosphere of horror, creating greater interactivity in the communication between the author and the reader.

## 1.2 Literature review

### *Frameworks of presupposition*

The history of the profound study of presupposition dates back more than half a century. The period of intensive research and discussions resulted in the distinguishing three major approaches to presupposition models: semantic, pragmatic, and dynamic. Semantic models, based on the ideas of Frege 1892 and Strawson 1964, focus on language logic and truth conditions. They suggest that presuppositions determine the meaning of a sentence and its evaluation as true or false. This approach is centered on logical structure and semantic content. (Frege, 1892; Strawson, 1964; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2020). The pragmatic approach, offered by Stalnaker in 1974, focuses not on the semantics of phrases, but on the context of their use in speech exchange. Stalnaker’s pragmatics perspective recognizes presuppositions as assumptions shared by participants and postulates required to continue the further course of speech. In this view, presuppositions are not a semantic property of sentences or individual statements, but a pragmatic property tied to the context of a conversation and the unity of assumptions that interact in this context (Ferrucci, 2022; Stalnaker, 1974). Dynamic models, including the ideas of Karttunen (Karttunen, 1973, 1974, 1977, 2016; Lewis, 1979; Gazdar, 1980), conceptualize presuppositions as tools for updating the “common ground”: presuppositions of communication participants. Here, speech, and, in general, language, is given in the context of its use, and each statement has the potential to modify the context of a conversation. Such models study the dynamics of presuppositions, that is, how updated “common ground” changes the information states of communication participants, emphasizing that their loss is not critical for a specific stage of conversation (Macagno, 2023). If we analyze the presupposition from the perspective of these models, it gives the following picture: semantic presupposition is the basis of the notional and semantic structure of presupposed phrases; pragmatic

presupposition is a conversational interaction. The dynamic model shows how the frequent update of the “common ground” changes the meaning of communication. Thus, presupposed ideas play a key role as a complex phenomenon, comprising formal-logical and semantic constructions that implement system-forming, contextual-pragmatic, and grammar-pragmatic roles.

### ***The functional role of presuppositions in communication***

Presuppositions play an important role in communication, building the basis for mutual understanding. In a broad sense, presuppositions provide the shared concepts, knowledge, and vocabulary that conversational partners bring to discourse. This shared background includes shared knowledge about the world, communicative events, and a logical foundation that guides the exchange of ideas (Ferrucci, 2022; Pang and Ren, 2023; Perl, 2019). Such a comprehensive approach emphasizes the practical dimension of presuppositions, outlining their role in facilitating meaningful communication through common understandings and concepts. Narrowly defined, presuppositions involve specific meanings and contexts that communicators expect to be appropriate and familiar in a particular conversational context. This aspect focuses on the immediate context of communication, where certain presuppositions are used to ensure that the message exchange process is coherent and pertinent to the discussion. This narrow perspective tends to focus more on the mechanics of context-specific communication and illustrates the function of presuppositions in navigating and enriching discourse (Batsevyeh, 2011).

### ***Concepts and challenges in presupposition theory***

We assume that the problems associated with the interpretation of the concept of presupposition arise because of the difficulties associated with how the rules of projection of presuppositions work. These difficulties sometimes lead to attempts to replace the presupposition with clearer and less confusing categories of entailment and implicature. Entailment pertains to the logical relationship between sentenc-

es, where if sentence A entails sentence B, then the truth of A necessitates the truth of B. This concept is based on the semantic meanings of linguistic expressions and is enforced by logical laws. In contrast, presupposition, which falls under pragmatics, involves implicit assumptions about the world or background beliefs taken for granted in discourse. Unlike entailments, presuppositions persist even when the sentence is negated, indicating a fundamental difference between the two. Additionally, while implicatures are fallible inferences, presuppositions are mutually known or assumed by both the speaker and the addressee. It's essential to note that the negation of an expression doesn't alter its presuppositions, distinguishing presupposition from entailment and implicature (Betti, 2022).

Within this context, issues such as accommodation, the cancellation of presuppositions, their interactions, and the functionality of triggers present a complex landscape for further analysis.

### ***Presupposition triggers***

Let us delve more deeply to the interpretation of the concept of “trigger” in the study of presupposition. Presupposition triggers, as defined by Yahya (2020), stem from specific linguistic constructions or lexical units and signal the presence of presuppositions within utterances. The differentiation of triggers into soft and hard types, offered by Dorit Abusch (2002; Abusch & Mats 2002; 2010), refines our understanding of how presuppositions interact with their context. Soft triggers, which vary based on context and can arise from alternative expressions, stand in contrast to hard triggers, which cannot be canceled and are deeply embedded in the discourse's semantic structure. This explains the mechanisms through which presuppositions are created in dialogue and reflects the role of conversational context, emphasizing the pragmatic model's focus on context in understanding communication. Romoli views soft triggers as conditional and contextually sensitive, while hard presuppositions never take a conditional position (2011). Jayez et al. (2014) study the interrelation between trigger types, context, and message and support the pragmatic perspective that effective

communication relies on shared assumptions and contextual awareness.

Conversely, Florian Schwarz (2015) questions the clear distinction between trigger types, suggesting that recognition depends solely on the context and emphasizing the primacy of context in the pragmatic framework. Examining the concept of presupposition triggers is essential for understanding presuppositions in the pragmatic model. In our study, the aim is to bridge gaps, highlighting the role of context in recognizing and interpreting presuppositions.

While discussing the complex nature of presupposition triggers, it is important to consider the role of assumptions in communication, particularly how they shape the attitudes of the author (speaker) and reader (listener) towards each other. This concept, presented by Morris (1971), outlines how signs are understood differently based on personal interpretations and backgrounds. These differences highlight the essence of pragmatic presupposition, which explores how the author (speaker) and the reader (listener) come together through common knowledge. Even when this shared knowledge leads to conclusions that potentially inaccurate. This brings us to the central role of presupposition triggers in communication: they function not just as linguistic cues but are interrelated with the assumptions brought by participants to a conversation. Recognizing these assumptions helps us identify how presuppositions are created, understood, and managed in communication situations (Sbisà, 2023). Thus, the concept of assumptions bridges the conceptual gap between the abstract nature of presupposition triggers and the tangible effects of their activation in communication. Through this lens, we see that presupposition triggers not only signal the presence of underlying assumptions but also play a significant role in mediating the dialogue between the author (speaker) and reader (listener).

### ***Proper names as presupposition triggers***

Most researchers approach PNs as hard presupposition triggers (van der Sandt, 1992; Zouhar, 2019). We align with the approach (Frege on Sense and Linguistic Meaning, 1990) in our definition of proper

names, which are lexical units specifically used to denote individual entities such as people, places, or organizations. This perspective emphasizes that proper names do more than merely refer; they carry an intrinsic semantic value that shapes presuppositions within dialogues. For instance, mentioning “Einstein” presupposes not only the existence of this historical figure but also evokes associations related to physics and intelligence. Similarly, referring to “Amazon” can presuppose both the river and the multinational company, depending on the context, illustrating the dynamic interplay of language and presupposition. Another example is the name “Juliet”, which in a conversation might bring with it cultural and literary presuppositions tied to Shakespeare’s play. Often, lexical units that have a similar or even the same meaning in different languages serve as triggers for the same presupposition. Thus, PNs usually project the same presupposition in different languages. This illustrates the general principle that separates the presupposition of the proper name from the subject of the message, namely the possibility of projecting the presupposition of PN even without a strict reference to the context. This brings us to the distinction between the general subject of the message and the role of PN within it. The former refers to the main idea or information conveyed in communication, while the latter – PN – acts as particular language components that can bring up certain assumptions related to the topic, regardless of the current conversation. This highlights the unique influence of PNs as hard triggers. Through the example of the story “The Lurking Fear” story, we will try to prove that PNs are hard triggers by providing examples where they evoke specific presuppositions across different contexts. This attempt is to support the theory that proper names function as hard triggers in narrative texts.

### **1.3 Objectives**

- 1 To identify the “trigger” functions of the onomasticon in the space of an individual story;
- 2 To investigate the scope of PNs that perform the functions of hard presupposition triggers in the story;

- 3 To determine the projection of the presumption of proper names and their functional component in the horror story.

Considering all of the above, the goal of our research is to derive the dependence of presupposition on the background knowledge of the author and the reader when using the functional potential of PNs in the role of the triggers of presupposition.

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1 Projection and cancellation of proper names presuppositions

As we mentioned earlier, projection is one of the main phenomena of presupposition (Langendoen and Savin, 1971). Let us consider how exactly a presupposition can be projected through the PN with the following example: “On an afternoon in early September, Arthur Munroe listened to my story.” (Lovecraft, 2014).

- (1.a) Arthur Munroe exists or existed.
- (1.b) There is a story told by the author.
- (1.c) Arthur Munroe knew the author of a story.
- (1.d) On an afternoon in early September, Arthur Munroe didn’t listen to my story.
- (1.e) Was it Arthur Munroe who listened to his story?

Statements (1.a), (1.b), and (1.c) represent presuppositions of the author’s sentence and follow from its meaning. Therefore, such statements are assumed to be true. The PN Arthur Munroe projects two of the three presuppositions around itself (1.a and 1.c).

Furthermore, sentence (1.d) uses a negation, which also helps determine the presence or absence of a presupposition. Regardless of whether Arthur Monroe listened to the story or not, such a person still exists. In the same way, in sentence (1.e), the question helps to diagnose the presupposition.

The diagnosis of presupposition is not limited to objections and questions, but in our opinion, such options are the most powerful and effective, the ones that are easiest to use, moreover, they are sufficient to identify the presupposition of PN. At the same

time, negations and questions eliminate the logical implication, while simultaneously, strengthen the presupposition.

If the presupposition does not arise, then it is “canceled”. Is it possible to abolish the presupposition of PN? To our mind, as in other cases, the presupposition of PN can be dismissed by creating a negation that states the impossibility of the existence of the PN holder. For example, Arthur Munroe couldn’t listen to your story because he didn’t exist. But in this case, the presupposition of the PN was canceled due to the introduction of the word “because” into the context, which creates its presupposition and a new context. In other words, one presupposition is revoked by another presupposition. If you abuse “artificial” presuppositional forms, the sentence may lose its logical meaning and begin to contradict itself, for example, Arthur Munroe listened to my story, however, he doesn’t exist. A logical paradox is created, which leads to the loss of the narrative content. This means the cancellation of the presupposition is important for proving its occurrence. Moreover, if you destroy a logical implication, it will automatically cease to exist.

“Projection” and “cancellation” are the main concepts that help define a presupposition. The presupposition is almost impossible to annul unless you use a direct negation of something the author has said before. Consequently, analyzing the phenomenon of presupposition triggered by proper names is challenging since even applying direct negation, it is very complicated to demonstrate that such a PN does not exist in the particular context.

### 2.2 Derivation of presupposition level dependency types

In Howard Phillips Lovecraft’s work “The Lurking Fear,” PNs are essential in crafting an atmosphere of horror, referring to the proper names used in a story or fictional world. These terms include not just characters and places, but also things, ideas, and cultural references, and they are counted at a rate of 100 units per 10 pages of the text. PNs perform the function of triggering the presupposition of the hor-

ror atmosphere and aid in constructing an onomastic model of space, essentially forming the author’s fictional world. It’s crucial to recognize that in fiction literature, the personality of the author plays an extremely important role, as the one who names objects and phenomena within the textual onomasticon. However, relying solely on proper names as presupposition triggers to evoke horror may not suffice. They contribute significantly to other narrative elements, such as setting descriptions, character interactions, and plot developments, as well as play crucial roles. The effectiveness of horror in literature is not solely determined by the presence of specific terms but by the intricate interplay of various elements that evoke fear, revulsion, and discomfort in the reader.

It should be noted that literary interpretation is subjective. The perception of a text saturated with emotions, feelings, and certain intentions is always based on the evaluative attitude of the reader towards what is said. Readers bring their perspectives, experiences, and emotional responses to the text, influencing how they perceive and evaluate it. Therefore, understanding the reader’s evaluative stance is essential in assessing the impact of literary devices, including PNs, as well as in creating the intended atmosphere of horror.

Lovecraft is known as a master of creating horrific worlds and unique geographical locations. Suppose the goal is not to find information about whether such objects exist in reality but to believe

the author. In that case, the objectivity of information perception will be influenced by the presence or absence of background knowledge of the reader about certain locations. In our case, the reader cannot know the locations because they were created artificially. On the other hand, PNs created by the author can sound like real objects. This, in turn, projects a presupposition, assuming that the reader can roughly imagine the geographical locations in question. However, background knowledge about the objects of reality, and common ideas about the world of the author and the reader, still play an important role in creating the presupposition of the perception of the PN, because the author and the reader must eventually come to at least a similar result in the process of the PN production and at the stage of its perception by the recipient.

The dependence of the level of presupposition on the background knowledge of the author and the reader can be depicted in the form of three graphs, namely the “perfect match,” “total mismatch,” and the “partial match” dependence. We assign 5 points for the absolute maximum and 0 for the minimum. Having a finite range of points, with 5 as the maximum, allows for a clear representation of different levels of presupposition dependence based on background knowledge. Furthermore, using a scale from 0 to 5 points provides flexibility in assessing the level of presupposition dependence without overly complicating the analysis.

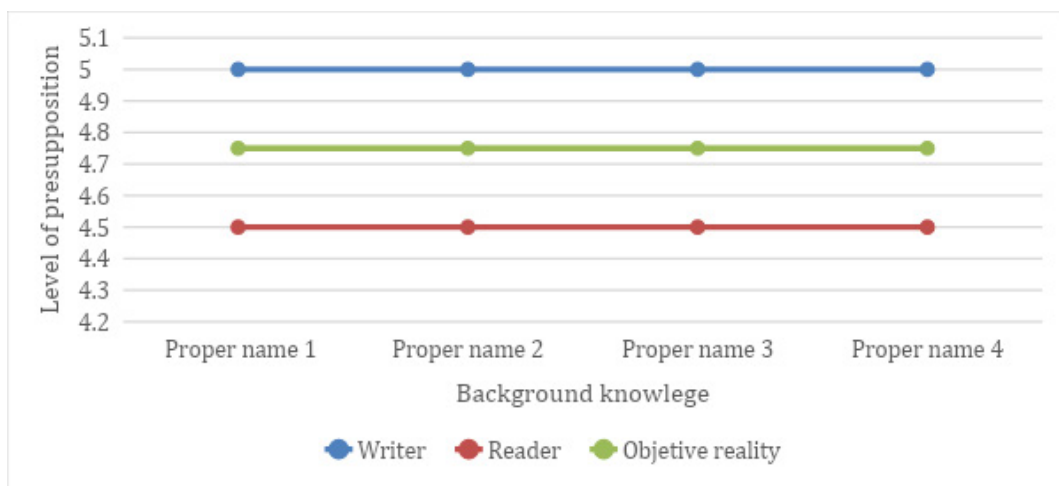


Figure 1. Relationship between the level of presupposition and background knowledge in determining the extent of “Perfect match”.

The first graph demonstrates how the “perfect match” of presupposition depends on the background knowledge of both the author and the reader. We put a notional difference of 0.5 points to emphasize that the author and the reader are different people with very similar views of what is depicted in the text, and the objective reality is always in a neutral position, or roughly speaking, in the middle. The author, as the creator of a distinct reality, is allotted the maximum score of 5 points, while the reader, interpreting the author’s work through their unique worldview, is assigned a value of 4.5 points. This dichotomy delineates the boundary between subjective interpretations.

Consider the example of “Jan Martense, whose room I had invaded, was buried in the grave-yard near the mansion...” (Lovecraft, 2014). Now we will

analyze possible presuppositions with “perfect” dependence.

(2.a) There was Jan Martense.

(2.b) Jan Martense is dead.

(2.c) Jan Martense is buried near the mansion.

(2.d) Perhaps the mansion belongs to the family of Jan Martense.

If the reader of the sentence about Jan Martense understands it exactly as the author intended, then the presupposition projected will closely match the author’s reality through the reader’s perspective. In other words, all information related to Jan Martense will create presuppositions that align with the author’s worldview, the reader’s interpretation, and objective reality, reflecting the author’s intended meaning in the reader’s perception.

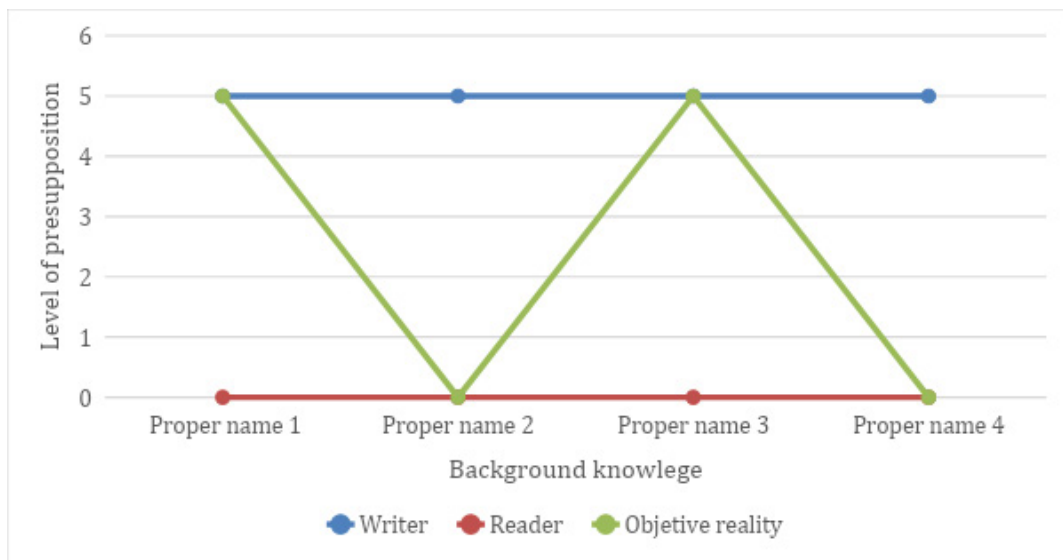


Figure 2. Relationship between the level of presupposition and background knowledge in determining the extent of “Total mismatch”.

The second graph illustrates how the “total mismatch” of presuppositions depends on the background knowledge of both the author and the reader. In this scenario, if the reality depicted by the author is assigned the maximum value of 5 points, then in cases of total misunderstanding or unique interpretation of the statement by the reader, the reader receives 0 points. Moreover, objective reality can range from being neutral to aligning more closely with either the author’s or the reader’s perspective, depending on the presuppositional narrative in use.

Let us take the following sentence: “I was between my two companions, George Bennett being toward the window and William Tobey toward the fireplace” (Lovecraft, 2014). Consider the examples with presuppositions:

(3.a) The reader does not believe that George Bennett and William Tobey are companions of the author.

(3.b) George Bennett is the author’s companion, while William Tobey is not.

(3.c) William Tobey is the author’s companion,



whereas George Bennett is not.

The reader may not believe at all that the main character, on whose behalf it is spoken, and George Bennett and William Tobey are companions (3.a), or they might think that only one of them is a companion while the other is not, as in examples (3.b) and (3.c). Either way, the reader can doubt the relationship between the main character and the named individuals because there's no background information about their connections in the text. If the reader doubts or does not believe at all what the author said,

it shows a dependence on the background knowledge of both the author and the reader, resulting in a “total mismatch” of the presupposition. The prediction that George Bennett and William Tobey are related to the main character, directly or indirectly, is possible. While George Bennett and William Tobey may be related to the main character in some way, the reader has the right to question this. In such cases, the presupposition becomes unstable: it relies on the author's intent but also on how the reader perceives it.



Figure 3. Relationship between the level of presupposition and background knowledge in determining the extent of “Partial match”.

Consider the graph depicting the relationship between the “partial match” of presuppositions and the background knowledge of both the author and the reader. In this graph, the author's intended message is rated at 5 points, while the reader's understanding may vary. We've illustrated the range from minimum to maximum variation, but other possibilities exist as well. Additionally, objective reality can shift its position; it may align with the author's viewpoint, or the reader's perspective, or remain neutral. Now, examine such an example with the following presuppositions:

“The Martense mansion was built in 1670 by Gent Martense, a wealthy New-Amsterdam merchant who disliked the changing order under British rule, and had constructed this magnificent domicile on a remote woodland summit whose untrodden sol-

itude and unusual scenery pleased him.” (Lovecraft, 2014).

(4.a) There was Gent Martense, who built the Martense mansion.

(4.b) The changing order under British rule did not bother Gent Martense.

If the reader assumes that Gent Martense existed, then the rule of matching background knowledge between the author and the reader applies (4.a). However, if the reader believes that Gent Martense was unaffected by the rule of Great Britain, they contradict the author, resulting in a mismatch of background knowledge. In such cases, objective reality may adopt a neutral stance, as we cannot determine the extent to which the British rule disturbed the average inhabitant of New Amsterdam. Nevertheless, we can speculate that such an interpretation is

plausible in Gent Martense's case, even if the reader may not believe it. Therefore, when considering the "partial match" dependence, the outcome of the presupposition can be influenced by various contradictions. To better understand the context, reliance on objective reality becomes more crucial.

Such graphs become more accurate when receiving data on the perception of information from a large number of readers, taking into account various parameters, such as age, level of education, familiarity with other works of the author, etc. We have depicted graphs with "conditional" parameters. For example, in the case of a "partial match," the lines on the graph may intersect randomly. **Figure 3** displays a 50% by 50% match. However, it can vary from the lowest possible number to an almost total match. The analysis of such dependencies helps us understand exactly how it is possible to influence the reader's perception, at which moment the presupposition becomes more intense, and when it manifests itself more passively. Presupposition likely manifests itself most effectively when the background knowledge of the author, the reader, and the objective reality coincide or come as close as possible to aligning within the context.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1 Proper names as triggers of presupposition

The presupposition of a linguistic statement is a prerequisite for its awareness and appropriateness. There is a concept of "epistemic presupposition", or in other words, a presupposition embedded in the meaning of a single word (Eflin, 2003). Epistemic presupposition refers to the underlying assumptions or beliefs that are taken for granted or presupposed in a given statement or argument, particularly in the realm of knowledge or epistemology. These presuppositions shape how we understand and interpret information and play a fundamental role in reasoning and communication. For our study, the epistemic presupposition is important, because we can explore its manifestation through the meaning of each PN in the text, which manifests itself as a trigger. As an ex-

ample, consider the name of the mountain (oronym) Tempest Mountain from the material of our study "The Lurking Fear". Presupposition triggering occurs in two stages:

(a) The word Mountain already has a built-in component included in the concept of "geographic object". In this case, the presupposition is projected by itself thanks to the "objectivity" trigger of the value embedded in the PN.

(b) The word Tempest expands the boundaries of perception of such an object as a mountain, triggering the creation of a certain atmosphere of tension thanks to the concepts of "storm" and "gale".

Therefore, we encounter a fairly unambiguous oronym trigger: Tempest Mountain, serving as an important geographical feature in the story "The Lurking Fear," around which the main events unfold. Moreover, the name Tempest itself hints at the nature of the story's setting, automatically evoking an atmosphere of tension. Suppose the oronym is immersed in the context. In that case, the impact on the reader increases literally from the first sentence of the work: "There was thunder in the air on the night I went to the deserted mansion atop Tempest Mountain to find the lurking fear." (Lovecraft, 2014). However, even without a complete sentence, the information that accumulates around the oronym Tempest Mountain is predictable, and therefore the presupposition is attached to the referents of the discourse. The PN like Tempest Mountain with its built-in triggering function is a good example for deriving the dependence of the "perfect match" level of presupposition on the background knowledge of the author and the reader. For the correct perception of information, the reader automatically uses intuition, due to which it becomes obvious that the named concept is a geographical object "mountain." If we assume that the reader thinks rationally, the probability of obtaining the "perfect match" is quite high. In essence, epistemic presuppositions are the background assumptions about what is known, knowable, or true that are necessary for meaningful communication and reasoning to take place. They can include beliefs about the reliability of sources of information, the validity of certain

forms of reasoning, or the nature of reality itself.

An interesting example of the projection of an epistemic presupposition in the horror story is the concept of the Charonian shadows, which is an unambiguously hard trigger (Lovecraft, 2014). Most readers may know that Charon is a mythological creature, who brought the souls of the dead across the river Styx. Let us imagine that we do not have the context of the story “The Lurking Fear”, but there are interlocutors X and Y. X turns to Y: “I associate ‘Charonian’ with death. What about you?”. If we assume that both interlocutors are rational in their thoughts, such a formulation involves several presuppositions, which may take the following form:

- 1 X does not know what the concept of Charonian is associated with for Y;
- 2 X assumes that for Y the concept of Charonian is associated with the same, or approximately the same, as X himself;
- 3 X assumes that Y has his understanding of the concept of Charonian;
- 4 Both understand that this concept has a rather dull meaning.

If one interlocutor knows the context, then the other can predict it – this is how presupposition can manifest itself through a separate word, namely through PN, showing clear triggering functions. In the case of the horror story “The Lurking Fear”, the meaning of the concept of Charonian activates the presupposition due to the contrast of the described phenomenon in the example of the following sentence: “I do not remember exactly how I managed to reach the motor-car, start it, and slip unobserved back to the village; for I retain no distinct impression save of wild-armed titan trees, demoniac mutterings of thunder, and Charonian shadows athwart the low mounds that dotted and streaked the region.” (Lovecraft, 2014). It is the part “for I retain no distinct impression save of” that indicates the opposite of how the character should perceive the described moment. The main character does not remember his actions; however, he remembers the dull and scary objects that surrounded him at that moment. “Charonian” has a purely negative connotation and it is a hard

trigger indicating how the scene should be perceived. Thus, Charonian works for the reader as an unambiguous trigger of presupposition, moreover, the phrase “for I retain no distinct impression save of” serves as triggers-amplifiers of presupposition, creating the necessary context for contrast. In this case, it is possible to design a presupposition with the level of “partial match”. After all, creating a contrast to a concept with a negative connotation does not necessarily have to lead to the creation of an exclusively negative context around a single PN in the reader’s perception. However, whether to switch to a negative perception of the described scene or not will depend on the reader, because they can separate the PN itself from the situation that happened in the story.

Understanding epistemic presuppositions is important in analyzing arguments, evaluating evidence, and engaging in critical thinking, as they often underlie the assumptions that shape our understanding of the world. The dependence of the “partial match” can have options for answering the questions “Yes?”, “No?”, “Maybe?” and is not always unambiguous with certain varieties of further projecting the presupposition. In this case, triggers in the form of PNs try to fix the interpretation of the message at a moment close to the unambiguity of perception. At the same time, a “perfect match” and a “total mismatch” will always answer the same questions unambiguously, either “yes” in the first case, or “no” in the second case. PNs as presupposition triggers at this point will play a role or a basis for further approximation of the level of coincidence of the background knowledge of the author and the reader or their total distance from each other, or perform the role of a fixator of the already achieved result of “perfect match” or “total mismatch.”

### 3.2 “Trigger” functions of proper names

To analyze the presupposition projection more accurately, taking into account all the above, it is important to distinguish the functions of the triggers. For PNs, we have described three types of projection functions as hard presupposition triggers.

Type 1. PN helps predict information regardless

of whether or not the reader has background knowledge about the subject of the work. It is illustrated in the following example: “Legal evidence was lacking, but the story spread rapidly round the countryside, and from that time the Martenses were ostracized by the world.” (Lovecraft, 2014). It is obvious that the PN Martenses is a surname for a group of people, that is, a family. No background knowledge is required to understand this information. Consider the presupposition of such an anthroponym:

(5.a) There is a family with the surname Martense.

(5.b) The family Martense doesn’t exist.

(5.c) Maybe the family Martense could exist.

On the one hand, the Martense family exists as a fiction of the author (5.a), on the other hand, such a family does not exist in reality (5.b). Thus, the perception of information through the PN is ambiguous: the Martenses are a family, but at the same time, it was invented by the author of the work. On the other hand, hypothetically such a family could exist in reality (5.c) and the author could base his story on real-life events. In this case, the “perfect match” dependency can be activated, because the background knowledge of the author and the reader, regardless of their level, allows a priori to predict the further context in which the Martense family will appear, even though this family can be real or fictional.

Type 2. PN can provide information through a connection with discourse referents. Consider the following sentence:

“I followed the accounts languidly at first, for I am a connoisseur in horrors; but after a week I detected an atmosphere which stirred me oddly, so that on August 5th, 1921, **I registered among the reporters who crowded the hotel at Lefferts Corners, nearest village to Tempest Mountain** and acknowledged headquarters of the searchers.” (Lovecraft, 2014).

We focus on the PN Lefferts Corners:

(6.a) There is a hotel at Lefferts Corners.

(6.b) Lefferts Corners is the village.

(6.c) Lefferts Corners is close to Tempest Mountain.

From all three sentences, it is possible to predict

the information that Lefferts Corners is a geographical object located near the “epicenter” of the events in the story, namely near Tempest Mountain. The connection with the discourse referents helps to project a presupposition that is close to the perfect one. However, the presence of other referents in the sentence can potentially divert the reader’s attention away from the presupposition triggered by one proper noun and towards the functions of other triggers. This diversion can sometimes mislead the reader. Then, the rule of dependence of the “partial match” activates: while one proper noun serves as a trigger for a presupposition aligned with the author’s intention, another proper noun may lead the projection in a different direction.

Type 3: PN can create its presupposition without reference to the context. Consider the following example: “God knows what I expected to find – I only felt that I was digging in the grave of a man whose ghost stalked by night.” (Lovecraft, 2014). The PN God is quite unambiguous – it has an obvious connotation. By using such a word in a sentence, the author strengthens the atmosphere of hopelessness. By itself, this name projects a presupposition that creates a basis of hope for an apt and unambiguous context of a story in the horror genre. There is no need to reinforce the word God with anything – it in itself is an extremely hard trigger that does not cause any ambiguities. In this case, all three types of dependencies can occur – “perfect match”, “partial match” and “total mismatch”. Such a hard trigger as God in most people is associated with approximately the same thing, and therefore the option of the occurrence of a “perfect match” becomes quite probable. However, it is impossible to always count on the exclusive rationality of both the author and the reader. Therefore, the options of “partial match” and “total mismatch” can also arise, if, for example, the reader brings a negative connotation to PN, based on his associations. Nevertheless, in all three cases of different dependencies, such PN as God can create its presupposition without being tied to the context in any way.

Therefore, predicting information, providing in-

formation through referent connections, and creating independent of context presuppositions are the main trigger functions of PNs. By interacting with the context, PNs strengthen their abilities to project presuppositions. However, even without reference to the context, projecting presuppositions for PNs is fairly probable.

## 4. Conclusion

The author and the interpretation of his knowledge and background, as well as the presence or absence of the reader's general knowledge about the subject of the conversation, could have an impact on the formation of the presuppositional content of the statement. The onomastic space of the horror story expands its presuppositional functions due to each PN, which triggers a specific interpretation of information. Moreover, even if the reader has no background knowledge of the designated bearer of the proper name, such as a geographic object, the author can make the PN sound like a real location. This creates a presupposition of the existence of such a geographical place in reality or the world invented by the author.

The projection of the presupposition should ultimately have a similar image both at the stage of its production by the author and its perception by the reader. It helps to derive the dependencies of the level of presupposition from the coincidence of the author's and the reader's background knowledge about the subject matter. In the case of a high probability of coincidence of background knowledge about the subject of conversation, a "perfect match" dependence might emerge. Despite the perfectionism embedded in its title, the emergence of such dependence is quite likely to arise – when the reader clearly understands the author, it can project a highly accurate presupposition. However, there might also be a "total mismatch" relationship as the recipient may have doubts about the validity of the statement; or the "partial match" situation, where something is perceived as the truth, and something raises doubts. Of course, it is the author's and the reader's background knowledge that can be adapted to a unified

standard, but there is always the possibility of one's vision of the situation, and therefore of designing one's presupposition, regardless of the objective reality.

The presupposition, as a prerequisite for the comprehension of the statement, was presented above through the trigger functions of PNs. Furthermore, they help predict information regardless of whether or not the reader has background knowledge about the subject matter. On the one hand, PNs can fully reveal their meaning without context, on the other hand, they are the author's inventions, but the context is necessary for an adequate interpretation of what is said. Certainly, the presupposition reveals itself more precisely if PN directly connects with discourse referents that reinforce the context. It is also worth remembering that PN can create its presupposition without reference to the context. Some PNs are quite unambiguous – they can have, for example, exclusively negative or only positive connotations (if you compare Charonian or God, for example). When using PNs that do not cause doubt in their interpretation, provided that the recipient's judgment is rational, the author tries to project rather unambiguous presuppositions. The role of such triggers can be described as a hard one, avoiding ambiguity in interpretation.

Interpreting different types of presuppositional dependencies and understanding the trigger functions of PNs helps to realize at what stage the influence on the reader becomes more intense, and at what stage its level decreases; when the author and the reader are on the same plane of information interpretation, and when they are not. It can also help to create texts that will have the maximum impact on the reader, stimulating the perception of information through the author's "eyes".

## Author contributions

Conceptualization, HK and IB; methodology, KT; software, SV; validation, YK, HK and IB; formal analysis, IK; investigation, IB; resources, YK; data curation, SV; writing—original draft preparation, HK; writing—review and editing, KT; visualization,

IK; supervision, HK; project administration; funding acquisition, KT. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

## Funding

This research received no external funding.

## References

- Abrusan, M., 2011. Predicting the presuppositions of soft triggers. *Linguist and Philos.* 34, 491–535. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-012-9108-y>
- Abusch, D., 2002. Lexical alternatives as a source of pragmatic presuppositions. *Semantics and linguistic theory.* 1–19.
- Abusch, D., Mats, R., 2002. Empty-domain effects for presuppositional and non-presuppositional determiners. *Context-dependence in the analysis of linguistic meaning.* pp. 7-27. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004487222\\_003](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004487222_003)
- Abusch, D., 2010. Factivity in exclamatives is a presupposition. *Studia Linguistica*, 64(1), 141–157.
- Anderson, J.M., 2007. *The Grammar of Names.* Oxford University Press: Oxford, USA.
- Batsevych, F.S., 2011. Introduction to linguistic pragmatics. Kyiv: Vydavnychiy tsentr «Akademiiia». (in Ukrainian).
- Betti, M.J., 2022. Entailment and Presupposition in Linguistics. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.29002.08645> (cited 3 March 2023).
- Coates, R.A., 2006. Properhood. *Language.* 82(2), 356–382. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2006.0084>
- Collins Dictionary. (n.d.). Onomasticon. Available from: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/onomasticon> (cited 10 May 2024).
- Eflin, J., 2003. Epistemic presuppositions and their consequences. *Metaphilosophy.* 34(1/2), 48–68. Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24439223> (cited 10 May 2024).
- Ferrucci, F., 2022. Assessing the Informative uses of Presuppositions and their Pragmatic Values. In: E. Seda Koc (ed.). *Research Developments in Arts and Social Studies Vol. 2.* Book Publisher International: Bhanjipur. pp. 131–141. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.9734/bpi/rdass/v2/15740d>
- Frege on Sense and Linguistic Meaning, 1990. Available from: <https://philosophy.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Burge-Frege-on-sense-and-linguistic-meaning.pdf> (cited 10 May 2024).
- Gazdar, G., 1980. *Pragmatics: Implicature, Presupposition and Logical Form.* Linguistic Society of America. 56(4), 902–905. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/413509>
- Huang, Y., 2014. *Pragmatics.* Oxford University Press: Oxford, USA.
- Jayez, J., Mongelli, V., Reboul, A., et al., 2014. Weak and strong triggers. In: Schwarz, F. (ed). *Experimental Perspectives on Presuppositions.* Studies in Theoretical Psycholinguistics. Springer: Cham. Pp: 173–193. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-07980-6\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-07980-6_8)
- Karttunen, L., 1973. Presuppositions of compound sentences. *Linguistic Inquiry.* 4, 167–193.
- Karttunen, L., 1974. Presuppositions and linguistic context. *Theoretical Linguistics,* 1, 181–194.
- Karttunen, L., Peters, S., 1977. Requiem for presupposition. *Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society:*

- California. p. 360–371.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3765/bls.v3i0.2257>
- Karttunen, L., 2016. Presupposition: What went wrong. *Semantics and Linguistic Theory*. 26, 705–731.
- Langendoen, D.T., Harris, S., 1971. The projection problem for presuppositions. In: Fillmore, C. Langendoen, D.T., (eds.). *Studies in Linguistic Semantics*. Holt, Reinhardt and Winston: NY. pp. 54–60.
- Levinson, S.C., 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Lewis, D., 1979. Scorekeeping in a language game. *Journal of Philosophical Logic*. 8, 339–359.
- Lovecraft, H.P., Weiss, G.H., 2014. *The Lurking Fear (Fantasy and Horror Classics): With a Dedication by George Henry Weiss*. Read Books Ltd: REDDITCH. pp. 1-35
- Macagno, F., 2023. Presupposition failures and the negotiation of the common ground. In: Kecskes, I. (ed.). *Common Ground in First Language and Intercultural Interaction*. De Gruyter: Berlin, Boston. pp. 81–102.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110766752-005>
- Martynyuk, A.P., 2011. Dictionary of the main terms of cognitive-discursive linguistics (in Ukrainian). Available from: <http://dspace.univer.kharkov.ua/handle/123456789/10763> (cited 10 May 2023).
- Morris, C.W., 1971. *Writings on the General Theory of Signs*. De Gruyter Mouton: Berlin, Boston.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110810592>
- Pang, Y., Ren, Z., 2023. Presupposition and its persuasive function in advertising language. *International Journal of Educational Research and Development*. 1(1), 10.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56028/ijerd.1.1.10.2023>
- Perl, C., 2019. Presuppositions, attitudes, and why they matter. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*. 98(2), 363–381.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00048402.2019.1621911>
- Romoli, J., 2011. The presuppositions of soft triggers aren't presuppositions. *Semantics and Linguistic Theory*. 21, 236–256.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3765/salt.v21i0.2619>
- Sbisà, M., 2023. Ideology and the Persuasive Use of Presupposition. In *Essays on Speech Acts and Other Topics in Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press: Oxford. pp. 53–71.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192844125.003.0004>
- Schwarz, F., 2015. Introduction: Presuppositions in context –theoretical issues and experimental perspectives. *Studies in Theoretical Psycholinguistics*. 45, 1–37.
- Stalnaker, R.C., 1974. Pragmatic presuppositions. In: Munitz, M.K., Unger, P.K. (eds.). *Semantics and Philosophy*. New York University Press: New York. pp. 197–213.
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2020. Presupposition. Available from: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/presupposition/> (20 January 2023).
- Strawson, P.F., 1964. Identifying reference and truth-values. *Theoria*. 30(2), 96-118.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-2567.1964.tb00404.x>
- Van der Sandt, R.A., 1992. Presupposition projection as anaphora resolution. *Journal of Semantics*. 9(4), 333–377.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jos/9.4.333>
- Van Langendonck, W., 2007. *Theory and typology of proper names*. De Gruyter Mouton: Berlin, Boston.
- Zouhar, M., 2019. An argument for the obstinate rigidity of proper names. *Grazer Philosophische Studien*. 96(4), 497–517.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/18756735-000067>