

Presuppositions in netizens' comments on celebrity Instagram posts: A pragmatic analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the types and functions of presuppositions in netizens' comments on celebrity Instagram posts. The data were collected from comments posted on the Instagram account @Ollaramlan between May and June 2025. Using qualitative content analysis, the study analyzed 51 presuppositional utterances selected through purposive sampling. The analysis identified four types of presupposition: existential, lexical, factive, and structural. Existential presupposition was the most frequent type (49.02%), followed by lexical presupposition (47.06%), while factive and structural presuppositions each occurred only once. Beyond identifying these types, the findings reveal that presuppositions function as linguistic resources for expressing judgment, appreciation, and affect. They also reflect shared cultural attitudes toward religion, beauty, authenticity, and family responsibility. These findings suggest that presuppositions enable commenters to communicate evaluations indirectly by presenting assumptions as shared knowledge, making them an important pragmatic resource in social media interaction.

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Introduction

Language functions not only as a medium for transmitting information but also as a resource for constructing social relationships, identities, and cultural values. Within linguistics, pragmatics examines how meaning is produced through context, shared knowledge, and speaker intention rather than linguistic form alone. One of the central concepts in pragmatics is presupposition, which refers to background assumptions that must be taken for granted for an utterance to be meaningful to its audience (Nasarudin et al., 2024). Putrayasa (2014), pragmatics is the study of language use to convey intentions during communicative acts, in accordance with the context and the speaker's circumstances. In the study of pragmatics, the meaning of an utterance is determined not only by linguistic elements but also by the context underlying the communication. Therefore, pragmatics examines how speakers use language to achieve specific goals and how interlocutors interpret those intentions based on the speech situation.

Language serves not only to exchange information but also to construct relationships, express attitudes, and negotiate social meanings. From a pragmatic perspective, the interpretation of an utterance depends not only on its linguistic form but also on contextual knowledge and shared assumptions between speakers and listeners. One important pragmatic concept is presupposition, which refers to information that speakers assume to be already known or accepted before an utterance is interpreted (Sbisà, 2021). Because presupposed information is treated as given rather than explicitly asserted, it influences how messages are understood while often remaining unnoticed. Nuramila (2020), pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that examines the meaning of utterances based on the context of their use. Pragmatics studies

the relationship between language and its users; consequently, the meaning of an utterance is determined not only by linguistic structure but also by the speech situation, the speaker's intent, and the shared knowledge between the speaker and the interlocutor. In the study of pragmatics, speech acts are a primary focus, as every utterance is essentially an action performed through language.

Presupposition has become one of the central topics in pragmatics because it explains how speakers communicate implicit meanings efficiently. Among the available analytical frameworks, Yule (2014) classifies presupposition into six categories: existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counterfactual. This taxonomy has been widely adopted in discourse studies because it provides a systematic way to identify the linguistic expressions that trigger background assumptions. Presuppositions therefore function not only as linguistic phenomena but also as pragmatic resources through which speakers present particular assumptions as shared knowledge. A presupposition is something already known or assumed by the speaker and the interlocutor that serves as the background for a speech act. In other words, before an utterance is made, the speaker assumes that certain information is already known or accepted by the listener, thereby enabling the utterance to be correctly understood (Chaer, 2010). As communication increasingly shifts into digital environments, scholars have begun to recognize the relevance of presupposition in online interactions, where implicit meaning contributes to stance-taking, group alignment, and the negotiation of social identity (Moldovan, 2023; Thoma et al., 2023). Nurfalupi (2018) notes that presuppositions embedded in clear sentence structures are often interpreted as established facts, regardless of the specific lexical choices used.

Recent studies have shown that presupposition occurs across a wide range of discourse genres. Research on literary texts (Berliana et al., 2024), television comedy (Selsia et al., 2024), political and journalistic discourse (Meyer, 1987; Thoma et al., 2023), and Indonesian social media interactions (Pasaribu et al., 2023; Harahap & Amri, 2023; Wahid et al., 2025) consistently demonstrates the presence of Yule's presupposition types in different communicative contexts. Collectively, these studies have contributed to understanding how implicit assumptions are linguistically realized and which presupposition types dominate particular genres. Fairclough (2015) view that presuppositions play an ideological role by embedding social values into everyday language.

However, most previous studies remain primarily descriptive. Their analyses largely focus on identifying and classifying presupposition types, while providing limited discussion of the interpersonal meanings that those presuppositions convey. Although some studies acknowledge that presuppositions may influence readers' interpretations, they rarely investigate how presupposed meanings function to express evaluation, construct public judgment, or reinforce shared cultural values. Consequently, existing research explains what types of presuppositions occur but offers less insight into how they operate as pragmatic resources for social evaluation in digital interaction.

Understanding this evaluative function is particularly important in social media communication. Unlike face-to-face interaction, social media comments often become spaces where users publicly negotiate opinions, moral values, and collective identities. Rather than expressing judgments directly, users frequently rely on implicit assumptions that invite readers to accept criticism, admiration, sympathy, or condemnation as already established. This evaluative dimension can be understood through Appraisal Theory, which views language as a resource for expressing attitudes, evaluating people and events, and positioning oneself toward others (Martin & White, 2005). Within this framework, the Attitude system—including Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation—provides a useful lens for interpreting how evaluative meanings are conveyed either explicitly or implicitly through discourse.

Integrating Yule's (2014) taxonomy with Appraisal Theory offers a more comprehensive perspective on presupposition in online discourse. While Yule's framework explains the linguistic forms that trigger implicit assumptions, Appraisal Theory helps explain how those assumptions function to express evaluation, negotiate interpersonal relationships, and reflect cultural values. Combining these two perspectives enables the analysis to move beyond structural classification toward a richer interpretation of the social meanings embedded in presupposed information.

Against this background, the present study investigates presuppositions in netizens' comments on the Instagram account of Indonesian celebrity Olla Ramlan (@ollaramlan). Celebrity Instagram accounts represent highly interactive public spaces where language is used not only to exchange opinions but also to construct moral judgments and social identities. Using comments posted between May and June 2025, this study identifies the types of presuppositions employed by netizens and examines how those presuppositions function to express social evaluations and cultural attitudes toward the celebrity. By combining pragmatic analysis with evaluative discourse analysis, this study seeks to extend previous research beyond the identification of presupposition types and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interpersonal role of presupposition in Indonesian social media discourse. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions. (1) What types of presuppositions

appear in netizens' comments on @ollaramlan's Instagram posts? (2) How do these presuppositions function to convey social evaluations and cultural attitudes toward the celebrity?

Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is appropriate for examining naturally occurring texts because it enables researchers to identify patterns, interpret meanings, and explain how language functions within its social context (Krippendorff, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach was selected because the study aimed not only to identify the types of presupposition used in Instagram comments but also to interpret how those presuppositions functioned to express social evaluations and cultural attitudes. Content analysis is particularly relevant for investigating online comments, as it allows researchers to uncover implicit assumptions, attitudes, and values embedded in digital communication (Sari, 2022).

Data Source

The data were collected from comments posted on the verified Instagram account of the Indonesian public figure @ollaramlan. The comments were taken from Instagram posts published between 24 May and 25 June 2025. During this period, all comments relevant to the topic of the study were collected. The data were then screened using the inclusion criteria established for this research. Comments that were irrelevant, duplicated, consisted only of emojis, or did not contain identifiable presupposition triggers were excluded. After the screening process, 51 comments were selected for detailed analysis because they contained linguistic evidence relevant to the research objectives.

Sampling Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling, as only comments relevant to the research objectives were analyzed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The selection process was conducted in two stages. First, all comments from the selected posts were compiled into a data corpus. Second, each comment was examined to determine whether it contained one or more presupposition triggers based on Yule's (2014) classification. A comment was included in the dataset if it (1) was written in Indonesian, (2) referred directly to Olla Ramlan or the content of the Instagram post, (3) contained at least one identifiable presupposition trigger, and (4) provided sufficient contextual information to allow pragmatic interpretation. Comments consisting only of emojis, hashtags, advertisements, repeated comments, user mentions, or comments lacking meaningful linguistic content were excluded because they did not provide adequate data for presupposition analysis.

Data Collection

Data were collected through non-participant observation, in which the researchers observed and documented comments without interacting with Instagram users. Each selected comment was transcribed into a coding sheet containing the original comment, posting date, presupposition trigger, presupposition type, and preliminary notes regarding its evaluative meaning. Throughout the research process, the researchers served as the primary research instrument, while the coding sheet functioned as a tool for organizing and managing the qualitative data systematically.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of qualitative data analysis proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis was conducted in two stages to address the two research questions. In the first stage, each comment was analyzed to identify presupposition triggers and classify them into one of the six presupposition types proposed by Yule (2014): existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counterfactual. The classification focused on identifying the implicit assumptions encoded in each comment. The research adopted content analysis, which enables systematic and objective identification of patterns and characteristics within texts (Arafat, 2018).

In the second stage, the comments were analyzed to determine their social evaluative functions. This stage adopted Appraisal Theory, particularly the Attitude system developed by Martin & White (2005), which explains how language expresses evaluation. The analysis focused on three evaluative categories: Affect, which reflects emotional responses; Judgment, which evaluates people's behavior, morality, or personal qualities; and Appreciation, which evaluates objects, appearances, events, or situations. These categories enabled the researchers to interpret how presupposed meanings were used to express praise, criticism, sympathy, disappointment, or condemnation toward the celebrity. Finally, the results from both analytical stages were integrated to explain the relationship between presupposition types and their communicative functions in expressing social evaluations and cultural attitudes within Instagram interactions.

Trustworthiness

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, the study followed the criteria of credibility proposed by Lincoln & Guba (1985). All coding decisions were documented throughout the analysis to maintain consistency and transparency. In addition, the coding results and interpretations were discussed through peer debriefing with colleagues familiar with pragmatics to minimize researcher bias and improve the credibility of the interpretations. During the analysis, each interpretation was repeatedly compared with the original comment and its interactional context to ensure that the identified presuppositions and evaluative meanings accurately reflected the intended discourse.

Results and Discussion

Results

1. Types of Presupposition Found in Instagram Comments

Table 1 presents the distribution of presupposition types identified in the Instagram comments. A total of 51 presupposition instances were found. Among the six categories proposed by Yule (2014), four types occurred in the data: existential, lexical, factive, and structural presuppositions. In contrast, non-factive and counterfactual presuppositions were not identified in the corpus.

Table 1. Distribution of Presupposition Types

<i>Types of Presupposition</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Existential	25	49.02%
Lexical	24	47.06%
Factive	1	1.96%
Structural	1	1.96%
Non-factive	0	0%
Counterfactual	0	0%
Total	51	100%

As shown in Table 1, existential presupposition was the most dominant category, accounting for 25 occurrences (49.02%), followed closely by lexical presupposition with 24 occurrences (47.06%). Meanwhile, factive and structural presuppositions each appeared only once (1.96%), whereas non-factive and counterfactual presuppositions did not occur in the dataset.

a. Existential Presupposition

Existential presupposition refers to the assumption that a person, object, event, or condition exists and is accepted as part of the shared background knowledge between speaker and hearer (Yule, 2014). This type of presupposition is commonly triggered by definite noun phrases, possessive constructions, and references that implicitly assume the existence of particular entities. Rather than introducing new information, existential presuppositions treat referents as already established, allowing speakers to concentrate on evaluating them instead of proving their existence.

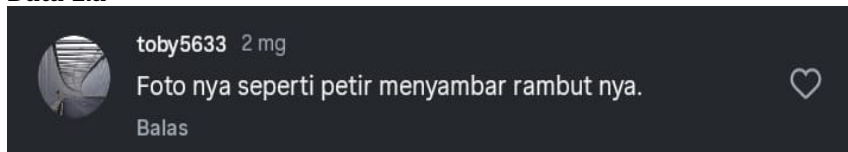
Among all categories identified in this study, existential presupposition occurred most frequently, representing 25 out of 51 instances (49.02%). This finding indicates that Instagram commenters predominantly relied on assumed shared knowledge when discussing public figures. Instead of explaining who or what they were referring to, commenters directly evaluated people, physical appearance, relationships, or religious practices as if these were already familiar to everyone participating in the discussion.

The predominance of existential presupposition reflects the nature of Instagram as a participatory digital platform where users commonly interact around publicly accessible posts. Since commenters observe the same images, captions, and previous discussions, many contextual elements become mutually recognizable. Consequently, speakers do not need to introduce referents explicitly because they assume that readers already understand who is being discussed and what event is taking place. This shared background allows comments to become shorter while maintaining their communicative effectiveness. As Erni et al. (2019) note, this type of presupposition emerges when certain sentence forms implicitly trigger other meanings.

Furthermore, existential presuppositions serve an important interpersonal function. By presenting certain entities or situations as unquestionably existing, commenters implicitly establish common ground with other users. This common ground strengthens the persuasive force of evaluations because readers are invited to accept the existence of particular conditions before considering the opinion itself. Rather than arguing whether an event occurred, commenters move directly to judging its meaning or consequences.

Data 1.a excerpts illustrate how existential presuppositions operate in the Instagram comments.

Data 1.a

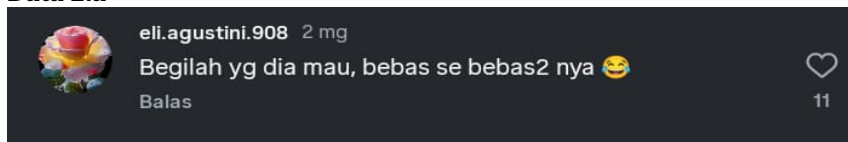


The comment posted on 13 June 2025 reads:

"fotonya seperti petir menyambar rambutnya"

This utterance contains an existential presupposition because it assumes the existence of particular entities that are treated as shared knowledge. The possessive form *fotonya* presupposes that a specific photograph already exists, while *rambutnya* presupposes the existence of a person possessing the hair being described. Neither entity is explicitly introduced because the speaker assumes that readers can immediately identify them from the Instagram post. The evaluation therefore focuses on the visual appearance rather than on establishing the existence of the photo or the person depicted.

Data 2.a

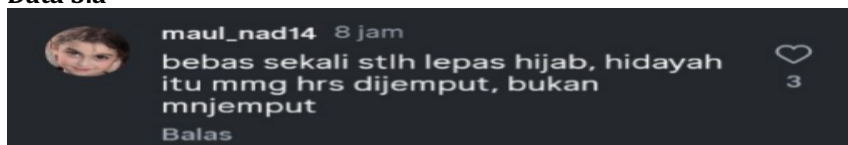


Another comment posted on 13 June 2025 states:

"Beginilah yang dia mau, bebas sebebaskan-bebasnya."

This utterance similarly contains an existential presupposition. The pronoun *dia* presupposes the existence of a specific individual whose identity is already known within the discussion. Likewise, the expression *yang dia mau* assumes that this individual possesses identifiable intentions or desires. Rather than explaining these intentions, the commenter treats them as common knowledge and proceeds directly to evaluate the person's decision.

Data 3.a



Another user commented:

"Bebas sekali setelah lepas hijab, hidayah itu memang harus dijemput."

Several existential presuppositions are embedded in this utterance. First, *lepas hijab* presupposes that the individual previously wore a hijab. Second, the noun *hidayah* is presented as an existing spiritual entity rather than a hypothetical concept. By assuming the existence of both the previous religious practice and divine guidance, the commenter evaluates the individual's decision within a religious framework without explicitly arguing for these assumptions.

Data 4.a



The final example states:

"Terlalu kurus, kembali ke pengaturan awal."

Although the subject is omitted, the comment presupposes the existence of the person under discussion. Moreover, the expression *kembali ke pengaturan awal* assumes the existence of an earlier physical condition considered more appropriate than the current one. This background assumption enables the commenter to evaluate bodily appearance while treating the previous condition as an accepted reference point.

b. Lexical Presupposition

Lexical presupposition was the second most frequent type identified in this study, accounting for 24 out of 51 occurrences (47.06%). This finding indicates that Instagram users frequently relied on lexical triggers to construct meanings that extended beyond the explicit content of their comments. Rather than directly stating background information, commenters selected particular lexical items that implicitly referred to previous events, continuing situations, or shared assumptions. These lexical choices enabled users to express evaluations while assuming that readers already possessed sufficient contextual knowledge to interpret the implied meanings.

According to Yule (2014), lexical presuppositions occur when the use of a particular lexical item conventionally presupposes another meaning that is not explicitly stated. Certain verbs, adjectives, comparative forms, and iterative expressions naturally imply the existence of a previous condition or event. Similarly, Beaver & Stanley (2025) argue that lexical presuppositions function as projective inferences because they survive even when an utterance is questioned or negated. Rather than merely describing reality, lexical items guide readers toward assumptions that become part of the interpretation of discourse. As Erni et al. (2019) explain, lexical presuppositions appear when a speaker's word choice indirectly signals another implied meaning.

Within the Instagram comments analyzed in this study, lexical presuppositions were primarily triggered by lexical items indicating return, continuation, comparison, and quantity, such as *kembali* (return), *lagi* (again), *lebih* (more), *masih* (still), and *tak semua* (not all). These expressions consistently presupposed previous states, ongoing situations, or commonly accepted beliefs, allowing commenters to communicate judgments implicitly rather than explicitly.

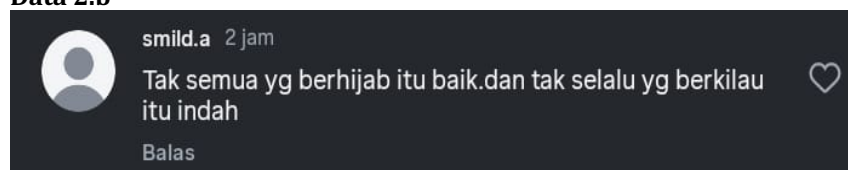
Data 1.b



This utterance illustrates a lexical presupposition triggered by the verb *kembali* ("return"). The lexical meaning of *kembali* inherently presupposes that the individual had once occupied a previous state before moving away from it. Consequently, the comment assumes that the person previously possessed her "true identity," later abandoned it, and has now returned to that earlier condition. Importantly, the speaker never explicitly explains what the previous identity was or why it had changed. Nevertheless, both the commenter and the audience are expected to understand this background from the surrounding social context. The lexical item itself therefore carries the hidden proposition that the previous identity genuinely existed.

The expression *akhirnya* ("finally") further strengthens this presupposition by implying that the return has been anticipated for some time. Rather than simply describing a present condition, the comment evaluates the current appearance as the desirable endpoint of an earlier transformation. Thus, the lexical presupposition not only reconstructs a previous state but simultaneously communicates approval of the current one.

Data 2.b



This utterance demonstrates lexical presupposition through the quantifier *tak semua* ("not all") and the adverb *selalu* ("always"). These lexical items presuppose the existence of commonly accepted beliefs before challenging them. The expression *tak semua yang berhijab itu baik* presupposes that many people generally believe wearing a hijab represents moral goodness. Likewise, *tak selalu berkilau itu indah* presupposes another common assumption that bright or attractive appearances naturally indicate beauty.

Interestingly, although the commenter rejects these beliefs, the lexical items themselves still require the audience to recognize their prior existence. Without such shared cultural assumptions, the sentence would lose much of its communicative force.

Data 3.b



dee_widjaya 4 hari

Menjadi diri sendiri lebih
mempesona menyala 🔥

The lexical trigger in this utterance is the comparative adjective *lebih* ("more"). Comparative forms inherently presuppose the existence of another condition against which comparison is made. By stating that being oneself is "more dazzling," the commenter implicitly assumes that there existed an earlier condition in which the individual appeared less authentic or less attractive. Although this earlier state is never directly mentioned, it becomes an unavoidable part of the interpretation because comparison cannot exist without two contrasting situations.

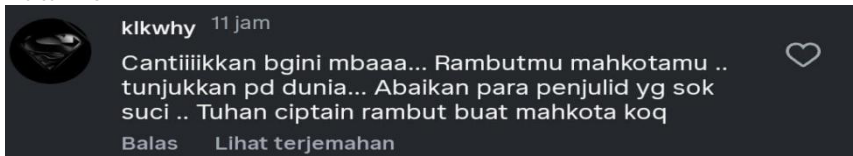
Unlike existential presupposition, which merely assumes the existence of entities, lexical presupposition here assumes a previous evaluative state. The comparison therefore reconstructs the narrative of personal transformation without explicitly describing the transformation itself. Within Appraisal Theory, this comment primarily expresses positive appreciation by assigning greater aesthetic value to authenticity. At the same time, it indirectly carries negative appreciation toward the earlier condition through the comparative structure.

c. Factive Presupposition

Factive presupposition was the least frequent type identified in this study, occurring only once (1.96%) among the fifty-one presuppositional utterances. Although infrequent, this finding demonstrates that Instagram users occasionally relied on lexical expressions that presented propositions as established facts rather than as opinions or assumptions. Unlike existential and lexical presuppositions, which construct background knowledge through assumed existence or previous states, factive presuppositions explicitly position information as unquestionably true. Harahap (2017) explains that non-factive presuppositions are linked to verbs that present information as unreal or uncertain. Jati et al. (2017) point out that verbs with precise meanings establish factuality in an utterance. Sari et al. (2018) note that non-factive presuppositions often convey meanings whose truth cannot be confirmed at the time of speaking.

According to Yule (2014), factive presuppositions are triggered by lexical items that conventionally presuppose the truth of the proposition that follows them. Similarly, Levinson (1983) explains that factive expressions lead hearers to accept embedded propositions as factual regardless of whether the speaker explicitly argues for their truth. Consequently, the communicative focus shifts away from verifying information toward evaluating its implications.

Data 1.c



This utterance represents the only example of factive presupposition identified in the dataset. The expression "*Tuhan ciptain rambut buat mahkota*" ("God created hair as a crown") presupposes the truth of the proposition that human hair was divinely created to function as a "crown." Rather than presenting this statement as a personal opinion, the commenter frames it as an unquestionable fact.

Similarly, the expression "*rambutmu mahkotamu*" further reinforces this presupposed truth by presenting uncovered hair as something naturally valuable and worthy of being displayed. The speaker does not provide evidence to support this interpretation because its truth is treated as self-evident.

Pragmatically, the comment serves not only to compliment the public figure but also to justify her appearance by appealing to a supposedly unquestionable truth. Consequently, the evaluation becomes more persuasive because it is grounded in a proposition presented as factual rather than subjective.

Viewed through Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), the utterance primarily expresses positive appreciation toward physical appearance while simultaneously conveying positive judgment regarding the decision to reveal one's hair. The factive presupposition provides the evaluative foundation upon which these attitudes are constructed.

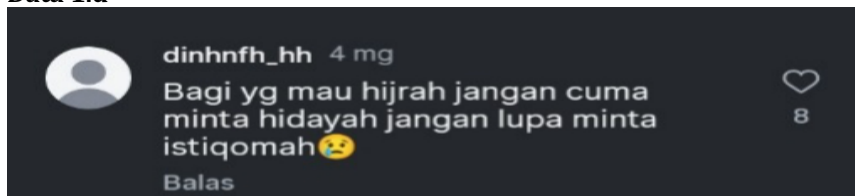
The low occurrence of factive presupposition suggests that Instagram commenters generally avoid presenting opinions as indisputable facts. Instead, they more frequently rely on existential and lexical presuppositions, which allow evaluation to remain indirect while still maintaining persuasive force.

d. Structural Presupposition

Structural presupposition also occurred only once (1.96%), making it equally rare within the dataset. This finding indicates that Instagram commenters seldom depended upon grammatical structures alone to convey implicit assumptions. Instead, they preferred lexical choices that carried presupposed meanings more directly. As Setiawan et al. (2018) explain, such structures guide readers to accept the existence of entities as given rather than as information that needs to be questioned.

Yule (2014) explains that structural presuppositions arise from conventional sentence patterns that automatically lead listeners to assume certain information as given. Rather than relying on particular lexical triggers, this type of presupposition is embedded within grammatical organization itself.

Data 1.d



This utterance illustrates structural presupposition through its imperative construction. The command "*jangan cuma minta hidayah*" ("don't only ask for guidance") presupposes that individuals who intend to perform *hijrah* commonly focus only on seeking divine guidance. Likewise, the second imperative "*jangan lupa minta istiqomah*" presupposes that steadfastness is equally necessary for sustaining religious commitment.

These assumptions are not explicitly stated but are embedded within the sentence structure itself. The imperative form naturally directs readers toward accepting the underlying assumptions before responding to the advice being offered.

Unlike lexical presupposition, which derives meaning from individual words such as *kembali* or *lagi*, structural presupposition arises because of the organization of the sentence. The grammatical construction guides readers to interpret the advice within an already established framework of shared religious understanding.

2. Functions of Presuppositions in Conveying Social Evaluation and Cultural Attitudes

The second research question examines how presuppositions function to convey social evaluations and cultural attitudes toward the celebrity in Instagram comments. While the first research question identified the linguistic types of presupposition, this section focuses on how those presuppositions shape evaluation in interaction. The analysis shows that presuppositions do more than provide background information. They establish assumptions that commenters expect readers to accept before interpreting the evaluation expressed in the comment. As a result, evaluations are presented as shared understandings rather than as personal opinions.

Drawing on Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), three evaluative functions were identified in the data: Judgment, Appreciation, and Affect. These evaluations are not expressed independently of presupposition. Instead, they are built upon information that is implicitly treated as already known or accepted by readers.

a. Presupposition as a Resource for Judgment

Judgment was the most prominent evaluative function identified in the comments. The data show that commenters frequently evaluated the celebrity's behaviour, personal choices, religious commitment, and authenticity. Rather than expressing these evaluations directly, they first established presupposed assumptions that served as the basis for moral evaluation.

For example, the comment:

"*Akhirnya kembali ke jatidiri lagi adek cantik.*"

It contains the lexical trigger *kembali* ("return"), which presupposes that the celebrity had previously possessed her "true identity" before moving away from it. This presupposed earlier state becomes the reference point against which the present situation is evaluated. Because the earlier identity is treated as an accepted fact rather than a debatable claim, readers are encouraged to interpret the current condition as an improvement. The positive judgment therefore arises not only from the compliment *cantik* ("pretty") but also from the presupposed return to an authentic self.

A similar pattern appears in the comment:

"*Bebas sekali setelah lepas hijab, hidayah itu memang harus dijemput.*"

The expression *lepas hijab* presupposes that the celebrity previously wore a hijab, while *hidayah* is presented as an existing spiritual reality. These assumptions establish a religious frame before the evaluation is expressed. Once the previous religious identity and the existence of divine guidance are taken for granted, the celebrity's current decision can be interpreted as evidence of changing religious commitment. The negative judgment therefore emerges from the presupposed background rather than from an explicit accusation.

Similar evaluative patterns also appear in comments referring to change, freedom, or returning to a previous condition. In each case, commenters first presuppose an earlier state and then evaluate the present one in relation to that background. The evaluation is therefore achieved indirectly, as readers are expected to accept the presupposed information before interpreting the comment itself.

b. Presupposition as a Resource for Appreciation

Presuppositions also function as a resource for Appreciation by allowing commenters to evaluate the celebrity's appearance, identity, and personal image. In these comments, presupposed information provides the standard against which aesthetic evaluations are made.

For example, the comment:

"Terlalu kurus, kembali ke pengaturan awal."

It contains both existential and lexical presuppositions. The omitted subject presupposes the existence of the celebrity, while the phrase *kembali ke pengaturan awal* ("return to the original setting") presupposes that an earlier physical appearance existed. Although this earlier appearance is never described explicitly, it functions as the benchmark for evaluating the celebrity's current condition. The comment therefore evaluates the present appearance by comparing it with a presupposed ideal rather than by describing that ideal directly.

A similar process can be observed in the comment:

"Rambutmu mahkotamu, tunjukkan pada dunia."

The expression presupposes that hair naturally possesses special value by describing it as a "crown." Because this assumption is presented as already accepted, the evaluation of visible hair as something beautiful or worthy of being shown appears natural rather than argumentative. The positive appreciation is therefore supported by the presupposed symbolic value of hair.

Likewise, the comment:

"Menjadi diri sendiri lebih mempesona menyala."

It contains the comparative marker *lebih* ("more"), which presupposes the existence of a previous condition. The comparison encourages readers to evaluate the celebrity's current appearance against that earlier state. Without explicitly describing the former condition, the comment presents the present identity as more attractive and authentic through comparison. In these examples, appreciation is constructed by comparing the current condition with a presupposed reference point rather than through direct description alone.

c. Presupposition as a Resource for Affect

The data also show that presuppositions function to express emotional responses toward the celebrity. Rather than stating emotions directly, commenters embed assumptions that allow readers to infer feelings such as admiration, disappointment, sympathy, or relief.

For instance, the comment:

"Beginilah yang dia mau, bebas sebebas-bebasnya."

It presupposes that the celebrity intentionally chose her current lifestyle. By attributing the situation to the celebrity's own decision, the comment creates the basis for interpreting the utterance as expressing disappointment or disapproval. The emotional stance is therefore conveyed through the presupposed intention rather than through explicit statements of feeling.

In contrast, the comment:

"Cantiiikkan bgini mbaaa..."

It expresses admiration by first presupposing that the celebrity's current appearance is appropriate and worthy of praise. Similarly, comments describing the celebrity as "finally returning" imply relief and satisfaction because the present situation is interpreted in relation to a presupposed earlier condition. In these examples, emotional meanings depend on assumptions established before the evaluation itself is expressed.

d. Presupposition in Constructing Cultural Attitudes

Beyond interpersonal evaluation, the comments also reveal recurring cultural assumptions embedded in presupposed meanings. Rather than explaining these beliefs explicitly, commenters treat them as shared knowledge that readers are expected to recognize.

Religious identity appears repeatedly through expressions referring to *hijab*, *hidayah*, *hijrah*, and *istiqomah*. These expressions presuppose that religious commitment is an important reference for evaluating personal behaviour. As a result, comments concerning the celebrity's appearance are interpreted not only as discussions of fashion or lifestyle but also as reflections on religious identity. Cultural assumptions about beauty are also evident throughout the data. Comments describing hair as a "crown," praising natural appearance, or comparing present and past physical conditions presuppose particular standards of attractiveness. These standards are not introduced or defended in the comments; instead, they function as shared reference points for evaluation.

Several comments additionally reveal assumptions about family roles and personal responsibility. References to motherhood, parenting, and life after divorce presuppose that certain social expectations already exist regarding parental responsibility and family relationships. These assumptions shape how commenters interpret the celebrity's personal choices without requiring explicit explanation.

In short, the findings indicate that presuppositions function as more than linguistic background information. By treating particular assumptions as already accepted, commenters are able to evaluate behaviour, appearance, emotions, and personal identity indirectly. Through these implicit assumptions, social evaluations become easier to communicate, while cultural attitudes concerning religion, beauty, authenticity, and family responsibility are presented as shared understandings within the online community.

Discussion

The findings show that presupposition plays a central role in shaping evaluation in Instagram comments. Rather than simply providing background information, presuppositions establish assumptions that readers are expected to accept before interpreting the speaker's opinion. In the comments analyzed in this study, evaluations of the celebrity's appearance, behaviour, and personal choices rarely stand alone. Instead, they are built upon information presented as already shared among participants. This allows evaluations to appear less subjective and more acceptable because they are grounded in assumptions that function as common knowledge. These findings support Stalnaker's (2002) notion of common ground while also suggesting that, in social media interaction, common ground is continuously constructed through users' repeated contributions rather than existing as a fixed body of shared knowledge.

Among the four types identified, existential and lexical presuppositions occurred far more frequently than factive and structural presuppositions. This pattern appears to reflect the communicative nature of Instagram. Since users comment on the same post, image, and discussion thread, they generally assume that readers already know the people and events being discussed. Consequently, there is little need to introduce referents or explain previous situations explicitly. Instead, commenters rely on expressions such as personal pronouns, possessive forms, and lexical triggers to move directly to evaluation. These findings suggest that the dominance of existential and lexical presuppositions is influenced not only by linguistic characteristics but also by the interactional demands of digital communication, where comments are expected to be brief, immediate, and context-dependent (Zappavigna, 2011; Yus, 2011).

Although existential and lexical presuppositions frequently co-occur, they perform different pragmatic functions. Existential presupposition establishes the existence of people, objects, or situations as shared knowledge, allowing commenters to evaluate them without introducing additional context. Lexical presupposition, on the other hand, reconstructs an earlier condition against which the present situation is interpreted. Lexical items such as *kembali*, *akhirnya*, and *lebih* encourage readers to compare the celebrity's current condition with a presupposed previous state. The findings therefore suggest a consistent process in which linguistic forms activate presupposed assumptions that subsequently guide readers' interpretation of the celebrity.

These findings are consistent with previous studies describing presupposition as a pragmatic strategy for presenting information as already known or accepted (Yule, 2014; Huang, 2014; Tonhauser et al., 2013). However, the present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that, in participatory social media discourse, presupposition serves not only to organise information but also to support interpersonal evaluation. Rather than simply helping readers identify shared information, presupposition guides them toward particular interpretations of authenticity, morality, and identity. This observation also complements studies of digital discourse which argue that online interaction is organised around shared evaluative orientations rather than detailed explanations (Zappavigna, 2011; Bou-Franch & Blitvich, 2014).

Nopiyanti & Mutia (2022) examined presuppositions in the discourse of Wardah beauty product advertisements. The study results indicate that the advertising utterances contain six types of presuppositions: existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counterfactual. These presuppositions serve as a persuasive strategy to build consumer confidence in the product's quality and superiority by conveying meaning implicitly. Susanti et al. (2025) analyzed three types of presupposition in the show *Lapor Pak* using a pragmatic approach. The study results indicate that existential, factive, and lexical presuppositions are the most dominant types. These three types of presupposition serve to support the delivery of humor and social criticism, while also helping the audience grasp implicit meanings through context and shared knowledge. In the Indonesian context, Wulandari (2020) found that social media users often use presuppositional verbs to express moral evaluations, especially in discussions about religion and gender roles.

The findings further indicate that presupposition and appraisal operate as complementary meaning-making resources. Presupposition establishes the assumptions that readers are expected to accept, while appraisal assigns evaluative meaning to those assumptions. Consequently, interpersonal evaluation does not arise from explicit evaluative words but from the interaction between implicit assumptions and evaluative language. Integrating Presupposition Theory and Appraisal Theory therefore provides a more comprehensive explanation of how evaluation is constructed in online discourse than applying either framework independently.

This relationship is particularly evident in Judgment, which was the most prominent evaluative category identified in the comments. Many comments first presuppose the celebrity's previous identity, religious commitment, or personal choices before evaluating her behaviour. Expressions such as *kembali*, *akhirnya*, *lepas hijab*, and *hidayah* establish a background against which moral evaluation becomes meaningful. Instead of directly stating that the celebrity has acted appropriately or inappropriately, commenters encourage readers to reach that conclusion through shared assumptions. As a result, evaluations appear less confrontational because they are presented as reasonable interpretations rather than explicit accusations.

This finding supports Martin & White's (2005) description of Judgment as the evaluation of behaviour according to socially recognised norms. However, the present study further demonstrates that these norms are often introduced through presupposition rather than explicit statements. Similarly, Hood (2010) argues that evaluative meanings develop across discourse rather than through isolated lexical items. The present findings extend this view by showing that presupposition provides the interpretive background through which moral evaluation is constructed in social media interaction.

A similar pattern can be observed in Appreciation, although the evaluation focuses on appearance and personal identity. Rather than describing beauty directly, commenters frequently compare the celebrity's current appearance with a presupposed earlier condition. Lexical triggers such as *lebih* and *kembali* encourage readers to reconstruct this previous state, which then functions as the reference point for evaluating the present one. Consequently, appreciation is expressed through comparison rather than direct description, allowing current appearance to be interpreted as more authentic, attractive, or appropriate.

These findings are consistent with Martin & White's (2005) explanation that Appreciation concerns the evaluation of appearances and qualities. They also support research on digital communication suggesting that online users rely heavily on shared contextual knowledge when constructing meaning (Zappavigna, 2011). The present study contributes to this discussion by showing that lexical presupposition provides the linguistic mechanism through which these shared assumptions are introduced before aesthetic evaluation takes place.

Presupposition also contributes to the expression of Affect, although emotional meanings are generally communicated indirectly. Rather than explicitly stating emotions such as admiration, disappointment, relief, or sympathy, commenters first establish assumptions that enable readers to infer these feelings. Comments referring to a "return" to an earlier condition, for example, imply satisfaction or relief, whereas comments presupposing deliberate personal choices often invite disappointment or criticism. Emotional evaluation therefore emerges from the interpretation of presupposed assumptions rather than from explicit emotional vocabulary. This finding supports previous studies showing that emotions in online interaction are frequently communicated through contextual and pragmatic resources (Zappavigna, 2018), while extending them by identifying presupposition as one of the linguistic mechanisms that enables this indirect expression.

Beyond interpersonal evaluation, the findings reveal that presuppositions also contribute to the construction of broader cultural attitudes. Recurring references to *hijab*, *hidayah*, authenticity, beauty, and family roles function as shared cultural assumptions against which the celebrity is evaluated. These values are rarely explained because they are treated as common knowledge within the interaction. Consequently, the comments do more than express personal opinions; they also reproduce social expectations regarding

religious commitment, physical appearance, and personal identity. This finding supports earlier studies suggesting that presupposition presents information as taken for granted (Stalnaker, 2002; Huang, 2014), while also complementing research on digital discourse that emphasises the role of shared evaluation in building online affiliation (Zappavigna, 2011).

The present study contributes theoretically by integrating Presupposition Theory and Appraisal Theory in the analysis of social media discourse. While previous studies have generally applied these frameworks separately, the present findings demonstrate that they explain different but complementary stages of meaning construction. Presupposition accounts for how assumptions are introduced into discourse, whereas Appraisal Theory explains how those assumptions become Judgment, Appreciation, and Affect. Examining the two frameworks together therefore provides a more complete understanding of implicit evaluation in online communication.

From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of analysing meanings that are implied rather than explicitly stated in social media communication. Online comments often appear to be simple personal opinions, yet they rely heavily on presupposed assumptions that influence how readers interpret public figures and social issues. Understanding these implicit meanings can contribute to research in pragmatics, discourse analysis, and digital communication, while also supporting media literacy by encouraging readers to critically evaluate the assumptions underlying online discussions.

In short, this study demonstrates that presupposition functions not only as a pragmatic resource for introducing shared assumptions but also as the foundation upon which interpersonal evaluation is constructed in Instagram comments. By establishing common ground before evaluation takes place, presupposition enables users to express judgments, appreciation, and affect in ways that appear natural and persuasive. These findings extend previous research by showing that, within participatory digital communication, presupposition is not merely a mechanism for managing background information but also an important resource for constructing social evaluation and reinforcing shared cultural understandings.

Conclusion

This study examined how presupposition functions in Instagram comments by combining Presupposition Theory and Appraisal Theory. The findings show that presupposition does more than introduce background information. It provides the shared assumptions that support interpersonal evaluation, allowing commenters to express Judgment, Appreciation, and Affect indirectly. The predominance of existential and lexical presuppositions further suggests that these forms are particularly suited to social media interaction, where communication is brief, contextual, and strongly dependent on shared knowledge. The study contributes to pragmatic research by showing that presupposition is not only a mechanism for managing implicit meaning but also a resource for constructing interpersonal evaluation in digital discourse. While previous studies have mainly focused on the semantic and pragmatic properties of presupposition, the present study demonstrates how presupposition works together with appraisal to shape evaluations of identity, behaviour, and appearance. Integrating these two frameworks provides a clearer explanation of how implicit assumptions and evaluative meanings interact in online communication. This study is limited to comments collected from one Instagram post about a single public figure. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within this specific interactional context. Future research could compare different social media platforms or examine other online topics, such as political, educational, or public issue discussions, to explore whether similar patterns of presupposition and evaluation occur across different digital communities.

Declarations

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| Author contribution | : | Redo Andi Marta was responsible for the overall research design, data analysis, and coordination of the study. Elan Halid contributed to data collection and assisted in the interpretation of the findings. Fitri Handayani was responsible for translating the manuscript into English and editing the content to improve clarity, coherence, and academic quality. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript. |
| Funding statement | : | This research did not receive any funding. |
| Conflict of interest | : | The authors declare that they have no competing interests related to this study. |
| Ethics Approval | : | Ethical approval and informed consent were not required for this study, as the data were obtained from publicly accessible Instagram comments |

and did not involve direct interaction with human participants, in accordance with the publication requirements of BAHASTRA.

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