Presupposition Use in Arabic Political Discourse: The Case of King Salman Speech on Terrorism

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Abstract

This paper aims at investigating presupposition use in Arabic political discourse. The study attempts to answer the feasibility of using presupposition as a convincing tool in Arabic political discourse. The study adopts the Accommodation Analysis model, as examples from the speech of Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz on terrorism in 2017 are analyzed from two perspectives: Speaker presupposition perspective and Utterance presupposition perspective. The analysis found that using the Speaker presupposition perspective, presuppositions can pass unblocked, and when a plug exists, the local context creates a hole so that the presupposition can be accommodated successfully. The analysis stresses the value of context to accommodate presuppositions when they encounter projection problems. Presuppositions are more likely blocked when the Utterance presupposition perspective is adopted because different groups may have different interpretations. The findings of the study stress that sharing knowledge, i.e., political beliefs in the context of the study, is vital for a presupposition to pass unblocked.

Keywords: presupposition, PDA, trigger, context, accommodation, Arabic

1. Introduction

In an era of political and ideological conflicts in the Middle East, political leaders use all available tools to rally their proponents and deter their opponents, including political speeches, which are well-crafted communicative acts drawing heavily on context. According to Van Dijk (1993, p. 114), politicians use speeches as a means to exhibit power to influence their audience, tending to use several language tools to reflect certain ideologies, and one of these tools is the use of presupposition. Wodak (1997, p. 173) argues that critical discourse, and by proxy political discourse, is a hybrid of linguistic and social theory as it studies real occurrences of social interaction, connecting text analysis to political context. Van Dijk (1997, p. 11) maintains that political discourse analysis tackles reproduction of political power, power abuse, or domination through political discourse, while putting emphasis on contexts.

This paper aims at exploring presupposition use in Arabic political discourse, as politicians use different pragmatic tools to achieve different goals, including passing messages to the public. The study attempts to answer how far a presupposition is an effective tool as a convincing technique for proponents and opponents in Arabic political discourse. The study is yet another step in a long road to understand how Arab politicians manipulate Arabic to deliver their messages and convince their audience with their views, choices and ideas.

Arabic pragmatics and Arabic political discourse, separately, have received considerable attention, but presupposition use in Arabic political discourse has not been attempted deeply enough, hence this study. The literature on the use of Arabic presupposition in political discourse is relatively small, compared to its significance and literature in other languages, such as English. Presupposition in Arabic is tackled within a wider context of linguistic analysis. For example, Benmamoun (1995) studied negative polarity and presupposition in Arabic, Wardat (2017) discussed pragmatic functions of presupposition in Arabic, and Khatanesh (2020) tackled pseudoclefts in standard Arabic. Therefore, literature on presupposition use in Arabic is often on the general domain, without shedding the light on presupposition use in political discourse. On the contrary, the topic is

widely discussed in other languages, including English. To cite a few examples, Polyzou (2015) argues that a systematization of presupposition analysis to uncover ideologies in political discourse is needed, proposing analyzing presupposition occurrences on different levels. Peter et al. (2016) identify presupposition as a strategy used by politicians to create dominance in debates and suggest that presupposition can be manipulated to create a huge effect on audience. Furko (2017) argues that the use of pragmatic markers, including presupposition, in political discourse is manipulative, suggesting that politicians use presupposition to pass statements as a taken for granted fact. Argina (2018) argues that presupposition is widely used in political speeches and campaigns for several reasons including achieving political agendas, character construction and emotional resonance.

It is common sense to suggest that political language is rich with pragmatic tools in general and presupposition in particular. Presupposition, mostly, is concerned with the embedded background assumptions made and consequently remain in force. In a nutshell, presupposition, as defined by Huang (2007, p. 65), is an inference or proposition whose truth is taken for granted in the utterance. Likewise, Yule (2000, p. 25) defines presupposition as something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance, adding that speakers, not sentences, have presuppositions. Consequently, presupposition in general can be seen as a technique used by a speaker to convince audience that what is assumed in an utterance is true, instead of asserting it is true.

There are different taxonomies of presupposition, but this paper adopts the detailed taxonomy of Huang (2007), where presupposition is classified into eight types, namely:

1) Definite descriptions

2) Factive predicates

    a. Epistemic or cognitive factives

    b. Emotive factives

3) Aspectual/Change of state predicates

4) Iteratives

    a. Iterative verbs

    b. Iterative adverbs

5) Implicative predicates

6) Temporal clauses

7) Cleft sentences

    a. Cleft

    b. Pseudo-cleft

8) Counterfactual conditionals

Presuppositions are generally engendered by presupposition triggers, which are either lexical items or linguistic constructions. In the taxonomy above, triggers for the first five types are lexical, while the triggers for the other three are structural.

Presupposition is a speaker-independent notion that has some distinctive properties, including constancy under negation: the assumption suggested by the use of presupposition shall remain in force when the sentence is negated/questioned, known as the 'negation test'. Other properties of presupposition include defeasibility/cancellability, so that presuppositions are cancellable if they are incompatible with background assumptions and conversational implicatures, according to Huang (2007, pp. 68−73).

According to Levinson (1983), a presupposition is nullified once it is inconsistent with real world knowledge or context, i.e., background assumptions, conversational implicatures, or in certain cases of discourse context when a presupposition is contextually cancellable. For example, a presupposition may vanish if it runs against the immediate discourse context, and may be suspended by reduction arguments, which are arguments that proceed by eliminating different possibilities in an utterance. A presupposition may also vanish if an evidence for their truth is rejected. Furthermore, a presupposition can also be nullified in certain intra-sentential contexts, and this gives rise to the projection problem of the presupposition. Nullification or denial instances of a presupposition in an intra-sentential context include in most cases negation, whether it is negation to the whole sentence or when there is an asymmetry between negative and positive sentences in the same utterance. In some instances, a presupposition can be suspended in an 'if' clause or with some verbs of sayings such as say/tell, or verbs of propositional attitude such as believe/think/want, as these verbs may generate other worlds, and may not

necessarily denote the real world we live in.

Defeasibility gives rise to another issue, which is the projection problem of the presupposition. In simple terms, what one expects is that when a simple sentence is a part of a complex sentence, then the presupposition of the simple sentence remains in force to be the presupposition of the complex sentence, as the meaning of a complex sentence is the sum of the meanings of its parts. This is generally known as the 'Fregean principle of compositionality', according to Janssen (1997). However, the presupposition of a component sentence may fail to be projected on to the complex sentence when the presupposition is denied overtly, suspended with the use of an 'if' clause, or cancelled in certain contexts such as saying or belief instances. Conversely, a presupposition survives in different situations, such as survival under negation, under modal operators, or when it is embedded in the conditional or disjunction. Therefore, Beaver (2001, p. 13) states that the projection problem is both the curse and blessing of modern presupposition theory, for it is both resistant to a solution while providing an objective basis for claims that there is a presuppositional component to meaning.

2. Methodology

In 2017, Saudi Arabia invited Arab, Islamic and American leaders to attend a summit in Riyadh, which marked the first leg of the first foreign visit of the then-newly elected US president Donald Trump. The summit's main objective was to counter terrorism and its illegal funding. In his speech, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz used several pragmatic tools to send messages to the world in general, and in particular to Iran, with which Saudi Arabia had cut diplomatic relations following an attack on the Saudi embassy in Tehran in January 2016. King Salman's tools included the use of presupposition, which served as a mechanism to convince others with his views to justify his choices and actions. In his address to the summit, the king's remarks evolved roughly around six themes: greetings and the introductory remarks, objectives of his speech, criticizing Iran, showing Saudi Arabia's sufferings from Iranian actions, action plan and a look forward, and finally the concluding remarks.

Sample statements of the King's speech that reflect presupposition use are collected for analysis, according to the taxonomy of presupposition types as illustrated in the introduction. For limitation of space, statements with similar presupposition functions are ignored. The English translation of the examples are translated by the authors, as literal as possible and as communicative as needed, in an attempt to show the linguistic structures used without causing any misrepresentation of meaning or linguistic aspects because published translations of the King's speech, however, are mostly functional in nature.

The Accommodation Analysis model shall be used to analyze selected examples. In the context of modern linguistics, there are three major presupposition analysis models, namely, the Filtering-satisfaction Analysis, the Cancellation Analysis, and the Accommodation Analysis. The Filtering-satisfaction Analysis model, also known as Karttunen-Stalnaker analysis model, introduced by Karttunen (1973) and later by Stalnaker (1999), focuses on satisfying the presupposition by its local context, or rather the set of propositions suggested dynamically, so that an unwanted presupposition may be filtered out. It classifies presupposition operators into three types: 1) plugs, to block off presuppositions of the first clause, 2) holes, to allow such presuppositions to ascend to the whole complex sentence, and 3) filters, to allow only some of the presuppositions to ascend to the whole sentence. The Cancellation Analysis model, introduced by Gazdar (1979), suggests that a presupposition is only potential, and when it is not defeated, it becomes an actual presupposition. While the first model focuses on local context that evaluates parts of a sentence, the second focuses on global context that evaluates the whole sentence. Soames (1982) and then Heim (1992) developed an analysis framework that accommodates both the filtering-satisfaction and the cancellation analysis models, known as the Accommodation Analysis model. This model suggests that a presupposition is dynamic, as it repairs discourse when necessary. Heim (1992) maintains that the meaning of an expression, including the presuppositions it carries, is its context change potential, stressing that the presupposition does not contradict with the context.

While this paper investigates presupposition use in Arabic political discourse, it is worth mentioning that Schaffner (1996, p. 201) argues that political discourse is functional inasmuch as it fulfills different political functions, and owing to the fact that it is thematic in terms of the relation between its topics and politics. This stresses the value of context, especially in presupposition use, which is an inference whose truth is taken for granted, while functioning as a precondition for an appropriate use of the utterance containing it. To emphasize the value of context, van Dijk (2008, p. 16) emphasizes that subjective interpretations of participants in a communicative situation affect discourse.

The analysis discusses how effective a presupposition may be used as a convincing technique for both proponents and opponents in Arabic political discourse. Selected examples that illustrate different presupposition types are translated into English, with a small commentary to link the example to its context, when needed. The

negation test shall be applied to verify that the example has a presupposition, and after identifying the type of the presupposition, the trigger is highlighted and the semantic value of the presupposition is discussed. The analysis also discusses any projection problem, using the Filtering-satisfaction Analysis model, and the global context of the example according to the Cancellation Analysis model. When required, repair steps as suggested by the Accommodation Analysis model are used to assess the functionality of the presupposition.

3. Analysis

At the outset of this section, it is worth mentioning that in the analysis and throughout this study, the symbol >> is used to denote *Presupposing* and ~>> is used to denote *Not Presupposing*. In this section, four examples are analyzed using the framework suggested in the methodology section. The analysis in this section reflects a Speaker Presupposition (SpP) Approach, which focuses mainly on linguistic markers. The analysis is followed by a discussion adopting an Utterance Presupposition (UP) approach for a deeper insight into the use of presupposition in Arabic political discourse.

3.1 Example 1

"ونجتمع اليوم في هذه القمة لنعبر عن الجدية في اتخاذ الخطوات الحثيثة لتعزيز شراكة حقيقية مع الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية الصديقة بما يخدم مصالحنا المشتركة ويسهم في تحقيق الأمن والسلام والتنمية للبشرية كلها وهو ما يؤكده ديننا الإسلامي الحنيف."

(Time: 03.02 to 03.31)

English Translation by the authors:

"And we are meeting today at this summit to express the seriousness in taking the vigorous steps to strengthen a true partnership with the friendly United States of America in a way that serves our common interests and contributes to achieving security, peace and development for all humanity, which is confirmed by our true Islamic religion."

The relations between Saudi Arabia and the United States are strong, on different levels. The Department of State's fact sheet on Saudi Arabia (https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-saudi-arabia/) explains that the unique role of Saudi Arabia in the Arab and Islamic worlds and having the second biggest oil reserves play a role in boosting the bilateral relations. The two countries also have a common interest in reserving the stability and security of this part of the world. The fact sheet adds that 'Saudi Arabia (…) is a strong partner in security and counterterrorism efforts and in military, diplomatic, and financial cooperation. Saudi Arabia launched its Vision 2030 program seeking to diversify its economy, where one of its goals is to increase trade and investment with some countries, including the United States. Talking about the Saudi American relations, the Saudi embassy in the US (https://www.saudiembassy.net/saudi-us-relations) says that the two countries have a longstanding relationship dating back to the 1930's. The relationship today is stronger than ever due to issues of national security and economic opportunities, stressing the Saudi Arabia remains one of America's closest allies and strongest economic partners in the Middle East. However, according to the remarks of the Saudi King, this relationship needs a boost, especially as the then-newly elect president Donald Trump made his first leg of his first foreign visit to Saudi Arabia.

The presupposition in 3.1 is spotted in the second theme tackled in the King's speech: objectives of the speech. The presupposition is as follows:

"And we are meeting today at this summit to express the seriousness in taking the vigorous steps to strengthen a true partnership with the friendly United States (…)."

>> There is a true partnership between Saudi Arabia and the United States of America.

This presupposition is verified by the negation test:

"And we are not meeting today at this summit to express the seriousness in taking the vigorous steps to strengthen a true partnership with the friendly United States (…)."

>> There is a true partnership between Saudi Arabia and the United States of America.

Even when we negate the utterance in different ways such as (to weaken/not to strengthen a true partnership), the presupposition is still constant as it presupposes that there is a true partnership between Saudi Arabia and the United States of America. The aspectual/change of state verb in example 3.1 (strengthen) is also the trigger.

In this utterance, there is no projection problem as the presupposition passes unblocked. Due to one of the principles of presupposition theory, the utterance of a sentence S presupposes a proposition P, if and only if S is true, then P is true, and if S is false, then P is still true. Therefore, there is no plug to block the presupposition of the lower clause, and the global and local contexts in this example are both clear. According to the context of the

Saudi King's statement, this presupposition aims at sending a message to both proponents and opponents that Saudi-American partnership is strong, and the two countries are taking further steps to reinforce the ties, a message suggesting that the two countries are together against any threat, and in this case, it is Iran. To strengthen the presupposition, King Salman uses another tool to convince audience with his view. Concluding his statement, Salman said (*which is confirmed by our true Islamic religion*), signaling that Islam supports his views. In this context, Stiltner and Steven (2009) state that politicians use religious statements and rhetoric to garner support from the audience. In this example, Salman shares his religious rhetoric with audience who have a special interest in religion, i.e., Arab and Islamic leaders and peoples.

3.2 Example 2

"إن النظام الإيراني يشكل رأس حربة الإرهاب العالمي منذ ثورة الخميني وحتى اليوم، وإننا في هذه الدولة منذ 300 عام لم نعرف إرهاباً أو تطرفاً حتى أطلت ثورة الخميني برأسها عام 1979م."

(Time: 06.23 to 06.46)

English Translation by the authors:

"It is the Iranian regime that spearheads the global terrorism since Al-Khomeini's revolution until today. We, in this country for 300 years, did not know terrorism or extremism until Al-Khomeini's revolution popped its head out in 1979."

Since 1984, Iran is at the US list for state sponsors of terrorism (https://www.state.gov/state-sponsors-of-terrorism/), while Saudi Arabia has always been a strong ally to the US. Saudi Arabia and Iran are two Islamic neighboring countries, but while Saudi Arabia is the leading Sunni Muslim power, Iran has positioned itself as its Shiite Muslim counterpart. The doctrinal feud has been looming for more than 1300 years but recent escalations were triggered by the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979. Recently, with the tense situation in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia repeatedly accused Iran of sponsoring terrorism and supporting Houthis in Yemen.

The presupposition in this example is spotted at the outset of the third theme in the King's speech: criticizing Iran. The presupposition is as follows:

"It is the Iranian regime that spearheads the global terrorism (...)"

>> A country spearheads global terrorism

This presupposition is verified by the negation test:

"It is not the Iranian regime that spearheads the global terrorism (…)"

>> A country spearheads global terrorism

The *it*-cleft sentence in example 3.2 is itself the trigger of the presupposition. The investigation of this example also depicts no projection problem, as the structure of the sentence allows a hole for the presupposition to fall upon the whole sentence. In his remarks, the Saudi King presupposes that there is a spearhead for global terrorism and extremism, and affirms that it has been responsible for global terror since the Iranian revolution started in 1979.

Delin (1992) maintains that clefts are usually used to communicate new information not entailed by the context, maintaining that the nature of *it*-cleft presuppositions makes the presupposition appears like a known fact in the discourse, and that this has observable linguistic effects provided that the information placed within an *it*-cleft seems to remind the audience, rather than to inform them. We can say that the use of the *it*-cleft here is an announcement by the king that the proposition of the utterance is a widely known and self-evident fact. Therefore, the global and local contexts in this example are clear, and accommodation is not needed for any repairs.

3.3 Example 3

"وقد ظن النظام في إيران أن صمتنا ضعفاً، وحكمتنا تراجعاً حتى فاض بنا الكيل من ممارساته العدوانية وتدخلاته كما شاهدنا في اليمن وغيرها من دول المنطقة."

(Time: 07.14 to 07.34)

English Translation by the authors:

"The regime in Iran thought that our silence is weakness and our wisdom is retreat, until we had enough of its hostile practices and interventions, as we have seen in Yemen and other countries in the region."

In this statement, King Salman describes the wise attitude of the Saudi state against hostilities of the Iranian

regime, especially supporting Houthis in Yemen, a country bordering Saudi Arabia. This utterance in 3.3 comes at the end of the third theme of the King's speech: criticizing Iran. The following is an analysis of this presupposition:

"The regime in Iran thought that our silence is weakness and our wisdom is retreat (…)"

~>> Saudi silence is weakness and Saudi wisdom is retreat.

The presupposition is further verified by the negation test:

"The regime in Iran did not think that our silence is weakness and our wisdom is retreat (…)"

~>> Saudi silence is weakness and Saudi wisdom is retreat.

In this example, an attitude verb is used (thought), and the presupposition in attitude contexts (such as believe, suggest, say, regret, etc.) may disappear by virtue of inter-sentential context. The presupposition that Saudis are weak and that they retreat is not present, which is logic particularly when the remarks are pronounced by the Saudi King himself. However, we may take the second part of the sentence in isolation and examine the presupposition it carries. The utterance would be:

"Our silence is weakness and our wisdom is retreat."

>> Saudis were silent and wise.

When the utterance is negated, it would be:

"Our silence is not weakness and our wisdom is not retreat."

>> Saudis were silent and wise.

This definite description type of presupposition is the desired presupposition, which shows that Saudi Arabia has been silent, i.e., patient, and wise. A plug in the utterance, i.e., thought, causes the projection problem in this example. The plug prevents the presupposition from remaining in force. In this case, blocking the presupposition overtly is desired, and a hole is given to the second part of the utterance so that the presupposition of the second part of the utterance prevails to the whole sentence. The trigger of the definite presupposition in this example makes it difficult to refute the presupposition, regardless of whether it is shared knowledge or not, according to Sbisá (1999). The context supports the presupposition, as the complement of the utterance maintains that Saudi Arabia had enough from Iran, which suggests that the presupposed Saudi wisdom and patience may not continue. The third theme in the King's speech, criticizing Iran, is rich with fact-based examples and criticism against the Iranian regime, which supports the presupposition that culminates the criticism.

The accommodation of the presupposition in this example gives rise to the global accommodation, as the utterance is evaluated against the context, and therefore the initial context of the utterance is amended to contain the assumption that Saudi Arabia is wise and patient, leading to the interpretation that Iran had hostile practices and interventions that annoy Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the local accommodation of this utterance, and the context against which parts of the utterance are evaluated, is blocked.

3.4 Example 4

"استمراراً في حربنا ضد الإرهاب نؤكد عزمنا في القضاء على تنظيم داعش، وغيره من التنظيمات الإرهابية، أياً كان دينها أو مذهبها أو فكرها، وهو ما دعانا جميعاً إلى تشكيل (التحالف الإسلامي العسكري لمحاربة الإرهاب) في خطوة رائدة لمحاصرة الإرهاب."

(Time: 09.44 to 10.14)

English Translation by the authors:

"Continuing our war against terrorism, we confirm our determination to wipe out ISIL organization and other terrorist organizations, regardless of their religion, sect or ideology. This is what called us all to form the (Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism) in a pioneering step to besiege terrorism."

This example falls within the fifth theme in the King's speech: Action Plan. Immediately before this utterance, the Saudi King said that the Gulf Cooperation Council countries concluded a historic agreement with the United States to foil means of financing terrorism, stressing that they will never be lenient to bring to justice whoever finances or supports terrorism in any form. In this example, the King reiterates what he said earlier, stressing the idea that war on terrorism continues, manipulating by presenting the issue as unquestionable.

The utterance can be analyzed as follows:

"Continuing our war against terrorism, we confirm our determination to wipe out ISIL organization (…)"

>> Saudis have launched a war against terrorism before.

The presupposition is further verified by the negation test:

"Not continuing/Stopping our war against terrorism, we confirm our determination to wipe out ISIL organization (…)"

>> Saudis have launched a war against terrorism before.

The word (continuing) is the trigger of this iterative presupposition. According to Crystal (1997, p. 206), the term 'iterative' is used to refer to repetition. The example shows no projection problem, as the presupposition of the lower phrase falls to the whole sentence, unblocked. The presupposition here functions as a convincing tool to the audience that Saudi Arabia had launched a war earlier against terrorism and funding terrorism, and it shall continue this war. The presupposition is also a justification for the action taken: forming the Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism, which is described by the King as a pioneering step to besiege terrorism.

While this presupposition is supported by both the general context of the situation on the ground and the local context of the King's speech, as represented by the preceding utterances, it serves as a prelude to the action plan that shall be taken. According to the King himself, this plan includes direct confrontation, launching of the International Center for Combating Extremism in Riyadh, achieving sustainable development, in addition to the mentioned military alliance.

In this example, Salman manipulated the shared ideological knowledge that ISIL is a terror organization, based on audience knowledge of the political context, to justify the message that Saudi Arabia has been launching a war against terrorism, presenting this ideological belief as a given one, according to van Dijk (2006).

4. Discussion

In the analysis section, four examples of presupposition use in Arabic political discourse are analyzed according to the applicable presupposition models, namely, the Filtering-satisfaction Analysis model, the Cancellation Analysis model, and the Accommodation Analysis model. However, it is important in this discussion to recall the argument on the functionality of political discourse and the relation between its topics and politics, as maintained by Schaffner (1996), a point that stresses the value of context. It is also important to note that Delin (1992) argues that presupposition marks information as being 'non-negotiable' when it appears.

The analysis of the four examples shows that the presupposition in each utterance can pass unblocked. Linguistically speaking, the presuppositions are successful, and even with a projection problem in the presupposition in 3.3, repairs are made to the utterance by means of global accommodation, and eventually the desired effect has been achieved. While the examples show no evidence of linguistic problems, this discussion tackles these presuppositions from a different perspective. It is of paramount importance at the outset of this discussion to recall that Stalnaker (1973) maintains that presupposition is an assumption shared by the interlocutors. Presupposition can also be discussed from different standpoints: one supports Stalnaker's view, that is speaker presupposition and the other is utterance presupposition.

According to Garcia-Carpintero (2014), the notion of speaker presupposition is about acceptance by the conversational partners of common beliefs and common knowledge, which means that accepting a proposition indicates taking it as true. The account of a speaker presupposition may then be described as the following: a group G accepts a proposition P in the common ground iff P is a common belief in G so that everyone accepts P. This can be dubbed as the Speaker Presupposition (SpP). On the other hand, Simons (2010) claims that the basic account of presupposition is utterance presupposition (UP), where an utterance U presupposes P provided that conveying P is not the communicative intention of the speaker, while the receiver of U must 'take the speaker of U to accept P in order to make sense of U'. Since the examples discussed in the analysis section are linguistically marked as presuppositions, this discussion shall discuss presuppositions of utterances rather than presuppositions of speakers to check how successful they are to serve as a convincing tool for both proponents and opponents of King Salman in his speech.

After checking the linguistically marked presupposition, the following is a re-examination of the four examples from another perspective, i.e., from the point of view of those who disagree with the King's remarks, to show semantic reflections on the value of the presuppositions. Taking on the four examples, we will assume that two groups receive each of the utterances, Group A shall be the proponents of King Salman who share his views, and Group B shall be the opponents of the King's views.

4.1 Example 1 - Revisited

In example 3.1, it is concluded that the linguistically marked utterance presupposes that there is a true

partnership between Saudi Arabia and the United States of America. From a SpP perspective, the presupposition passes unblocked. To analyze the example from a UP perspective, the presupposition should be measured based on how group A and group B receive it. Success of the presupposition depends on the formula that a group G accepts a proposition P in the common ground iff P is a common belief in G so that everyone accepts P. Group A GA accepts the proposition P that Saudi Arabia and the United States have a true partnership if and only if P is a common belief in GA, so that everyone accepts the proposition P. The same applies to Group B GB, as GB also accepts the proposition P that Saudi Arabia and the United States have a true partnership if and only if P is a common belief in GB.

The presupposition in this example passes unblocked to both groups, as the Saudi-American partnership is an undisputed matter. In this regard, Polyzou (2015) claims that if the presupposition is defined as 'shared knowledge', then one may ask whether they are shared or given. In this context, the presupposition is shared. Therefore, the presupposition passes unblocked from both the SpP and UP perspectives.

4.2 Example 2 - Revisited

Example 3.2 shows that the linguistically marked utterance, from a SpP perspective, presupposes that a country spearheads global terrorism, and the presupposition passes unblocked. However, a UP analysis illustrates a different perspective. Group A GA accepts the proposition P that a country spearheads global terrorism, and the sentence says that it is Iran in the common ground, if and only if P is a common belief in GA that supports the king's view so that everyone in GA accepts P. On the other hand, Group B GB, which supports the Iranian regime, does not accept the proposition P; therefore, P is not a common belief in GB and duly not everyone accepts P. In this case, the presupposition passes unblocked for GA, but it is otherwise for GB. In this context, Sbisà (1999) suggests that when a presupposition is relevant to values or ideals, then the listener may accept it. The presupposition in this case may have an informative value, as the listener, sometimes, accommodates the presupposition by adding it to the shared background beliefs, and it may serve as a persuasive tool.

4.3 Example 3 - Revisited

Example 3.3 is different from the previous two examples due to the use of a saying/belief verb; however, the presupposition, from the SpP Perspective, passes unblocked and suggests that (Saudis were silent and wise), as this presupposition is accommodated by the context. According to the UP Perspective, GA accepts the proposition P that Saudis were silent and wise in the common ground because P is a common belief in GA so that everyone accepts P. On the other hand, GB does not accept the proposition P in the common ground, and because P is not a common belief in GB, not everyone accepts P. According to van Dijk (2003), a group may consider the knowledge and ideology of another group as false, which is the case in this example.

4.4 Example 4 - Revisited

In example 3.4, the SpP passes unblocked, presupposing that Saudis have launched a war against terrorism before. From the UG perspective, GA accepts the proposition P that Saudis launched a war against terrorism before in the common ground because P is a common belief in GA so that everyone accepts P. On the contrary, GB does not accept the proposition P in the common ground, as perhaps they may think that Saudis have launched a war against them, and because P is not a common belief in GB, not everyone accepts P. For group B, the presupposition vanishes because it runs against the immediate discourse context of group B.

Examples 3.1 through 3.4, and by proxy 4.1 through 4.4, illustrate different types of presupposition. All of them are successful presupposition from a SpP perspective, while only one of them is successful from a UP perspective because both groups (A and B, proponents and opponents, respectively) have a common ground of the proposition. This stresses the value of context, especially in presupposition use, which is an inference whose truth is taken for granted, while functioning as a precondition for an appropriate use of the utterance containing it.

Shared knowledge, and in the case of political discourse, ideologies, beliefs, and ideas, is vital for a presupposition to pass unblocked. This questions the truth of the utterance that includes a presupposition, which may lead to presupposition failure. In political discourse, such sentences that carry presupposition are neither true nor false, but they simply show a truth-value gap, which is described by Horn (1996) as a truth-functional black hole.

5. Conclusion

Presupposition in political discourse is a strong tool manipulated by politicians for several reasons including passing messages to their audience, and Arabic is not an exception. This paper investigates presupposition use in Arabic political discourse: the case of Saudi King Salman's speech on terrorism. The study is only a step in a

long road to investigate presupposition use in Arabic political discourse, yet the effects of presupposing in Arabic political discourse are interesting to note. The study stresses the fact that presupposition refers to inferences and assumptions that are built into linguistic expressions, while achieved and enforced by context, and therefore they serve as a convincing tool. The study analyzed four presupposition examples from the speech of the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz on terrorism delivered in the Arab, Islamic and American Summit, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in May 2017. The examples are analyzed from two perspectives, namely the Speaker Presupposition (SpP) perspective and the Utterance Presupposition perspective. The former focuses on the linguistically marked presupposition, using the Accommodation Analysis framework, and proves that the context is vital in accommodating the presupposition if it has a projection problem. The analysis from the UP perspective finds that for a presupposition in a political discourse to pass unblocked, a common ground of the proposition must be shared between the participants in a communicative situation. This stresses again the significance of context, and comes in line with the view put forward by Yule (2000) that speakers have presuppositions, not sentences. Furthermore, the study findings come in line with the notion that a presupposition may vanish if it runs against the immediate discourse context, or if an evidence for their truth is rejected. The study concludes that in the context of political discourse, shared beliefs and ideas are the key for a presupposition to pass and to have its intended effect.

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