

COMMUNICATIVE-PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF IMPLICIT MEANING AND
PRESUPPOSITION IN PRAGMATIC LINGUISTICS

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This article examines the communicative-pragmatic features of implicit meaning and presupposition within the framework of pragmatic linguistics. It discusses how linguistic units convey not only explicitly expressed information but also meanings that are indirectly implied and understood through context. Special attention is paid to the role of presupposition in forming shared background knowledge between the speaker and the listener. The article also analyzes how implicit meaning contributes to indirect expression, communicative economy, politeness, and the speaker's pragmatic intention in the process of communication.

In modern linguistics, language is studied not only as a system of words and grammatical rules, but also as a means of expressing human intention, attitude, and communicative purpose. In real communication, speakers do not always express all information directly. Very often, part of the meaning remains implicit and is understood by the listener through context,

shared knowledge, and the speech situation. For this reason, pragmatic linguistics plays an important role in analyzing how meaning is created and interpreted in actual language use.

Implicit meaning and presupposition are among the central issues of pragmatic linguistics. Presupposition refers to the information that is assumed to be already known or accepted by both the speaker and the listener. For example, in the sentence “She stopped smoking,” the direct meaning is that she does not smoke now, while the presupposed meaning is that she smoked before. Such hidden information is not stated openly, but it is understood from the structure and meaning of the sentence.

Implicit meaning is broader than presupposition. It includes meanings that are not directly expressed but can be understood from the speaker’s intention, tone, context, or communicative situation. For instance, the sentence “It is cold here” may simply describe the temperature, but in a particular context it may mean “Please close the window.” This shows that language often carries more meaning than what is directly said.

The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that successful communication depends not only on understanding explicit words, but also on interpreting hidden meanings correctly. Therefore, the study of implicit meaning and presupposition helps to reveal the communicative-pragmatic features of language and explains how speakers influence listeners, express politeness, save speech effort, and convey additional information indirectly.

Pragmatic linguistics studies language not only as a system of grammatical forms and lexical meanings, but also as a means of expressing communicative intention in a concrete speech situation. In German, the meaning of an utterance often goes beyond the literal content of words. A speaker may express additional information indirectly through lexical markers, modal particles, sentence structure, intonation, and context. Therefore, the analysis of implicit meaning and presupposition in German is important for understanding how communication functions at the pragmatic level [1].

Presupposition refers to information that is not directly stated in the sentence but is assumed to be true or already known by the participants of communication. In German, presupposition may be expressed through words such as wieder, noch, schon, auch, and endlich, as well as through certain verbs and syntactic constructions.

For example: Anna hat wieder den Unterricht versäumt. Translation: Anna missed the lesson again.

The explicit meaning of this sentence is that Anna missed the lesson. However, the word wieder creates a presupposition: Anna has missed the lesson before. This information is not stated separately, but it is understood by the listener. Thus, in German, wieder functions not

only as a marker of repetition but also as a means of conveying hidden background information [2].

Another example is: Peter hat aufgehört zu rauchen. Translation: Peter stopped smoking.

The direct meaning is that Peter does not smoke now. However, the verb aufhören presupposes that Peter smoked before. Without this previous state, the sentence would not be logically complete. This shows that some German verbs contain presupposed information within their semantic structure.

Implicit meaning is broader than presupposition. It includes meanings that are not directly expressed but can be understood from the speaker's intention, communicative situation, tone, or shared knowledge. For example:

Es ist hier kalt. Translation: It is cold here. At the literal level, this sentence describes the temperature of the place. However, if the window is open, the implicit meaning may be:

Bitte schließen Sie das Fenster. Translation: Please close the window.

In this case, the speaker does not use a direct command. Instead, the speaker describes the situation and expects the listener to understand the intended request. This example shows that implicit meaning in German often performs the function of an indirect request [3].

Modal particles are especially important in German pragmatics. Words such as doch, ja, wohl, eben, halt, and aber often do not change the basic propositional meaning of the sentence, but they add pragmatic meaning. They show the speaker's attitude, expectation, emotional evaluation, or relation to the listener.

For example: Das weißt du doch. Translation: You know that, don't you?

The explicit meaning is that the listener knows something. However, the modal particle doch adds an implicit meaning: the listener is expected to know it, and the speaker may be slightly surprised that it needs to be mentioned. Therefore, doch helps express the speaker's attitude indirectly.

Another example is: Du bist heute aber früh gekommen. Translation: You came very early today.

If the listener really arrived early, the sentence may express positive surprise. However, if the listener arrived late, the same sentence may function as irony. In this situation, the literal meaning and the intended meaning are opposite. This proves that implicit meaning strongly depends on context, intonation, and the relationship between speakers. Implicit meaning and presupposition also support politeness in German communication. In formal situations, direct commands are often avoided. Instead, speakers use interrogative or conditional forms to make the utterance softer.

For example: Könnten Sie bitte die Tür schließen? Translation: Could you please close the door?

Grammatically, this sentence is a question about ability. Pragmatically, however, it is a polite request. The speaker does not say Schließen Sie die Tür! directly. By using Könnten Sie bitte...?, the speaker reduces the force of the command and maintains respectful communication. Presupposition also helps to make speech more economical. A speaker does not need to explain every detail because some information is already included indirectly in the sentence.

For example: Maria ist noch im Büro. Translation: Maria is still in the office.

The explicit meaning is that Maria is in the office now. The word noch presupposes that Maria was in the office before and continues to be there. Thus, one short sentence gives both direct and background information. Another important communicative-pragmatic function is evaluation. German words such as endlich, schon, and ja may express the speaker's emotional or evaluative attitude.

For example: Du hast die Aufgabe endlich gemacht. Translation: You finally did the task.

The direct information is that the task has been completed. However, endlich implies that the speaker waited for a long time or expected the task to be done earlier. In this case, presupposition and implicit evaluation appear together [4].

From these examples, it can be seen that in German presupposition mainly provides hidden background information, while implicit meaning expresses the speaker's communicative intention indirectly. Presupposition is often connected with lexical items and verbs, whereas implicit meaning depends more strongly on context, tone, and the social relationship between the speaker and the listener.

In conclusion, implicit meaning and presupposition are essential elements of German pragmatic communication. They help speakers convey additional information, express politeness, show attitude, create irony, make requests indirectly, and organize speech economically. Their study allows us to understand not only the literal structure of German sentences, but also the hidden communicative intentions behind them.

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