

Sentence, Utterance, and Presupposition in Charles Dickens' A Child's Dream of A Star

Amanda Ravinska Syaira¹, Annisa Yumna Maharani², Callysta Feodora Laiskodat³,
Kayla Nadine Putri Azra⁴
Universitas Pamulang^{1,2,3,4}

Author's Email:

mandaravinskas@gmail.com¹, annisayumnam@gmail.com², valocalls@gmail.com³, kayla0109.azra@gmail.com⁴

History Article:

Received 06 20, 2025
Accepted 06 25, 2025
Published 06 27, 2025

ABSTRACT

This analysis reveals that Dickens' A Child's Dream of a Star employs a rich mix of sentence types and pragmatic cues to convey its themes. The literal meaning of each sentence (semantic content) is often clear, but the full meaning arises only when utterance context and presuppositions are taken into account. Declarative sentences ground the narrative, interrogatives express longing or speculation, and exclamations/imperatives heighten emotion. Presuppositions – the assumptions characters take for granted – shape how readers understand the familial and spiritual context. For instance, the repeated use of "Is my brother come?" presupposes a belief in life after death and familial reunion, driving the story's emotional arc. The study underscores that even in a literary text, formal semantics and pragmatic theory are both needed to explain how meaning is constructed. By tabulating sentence, utterance, and presupposition features, we see the interplay between grammatical form and inferred content. These insights have implications for semantics research: they show that narrative language engages everyday presuppositions and speech-act conventions, and that analyzing such texts can illustrate how speakers use language creatively yet systematically. Further work could apply similar analyses to other literary works, or investigate reader interpretations of presupposed content.

Keywords: Sentence, Utterance, Presupposition

How to Cite:

Amanda Ravinska Syaira, Annisa Yumna Maharani², Callysta Feodora Laiskodat, & Kayla Nadine Putri Azra. (2025). Sentence, Utterance, and Presupposition in Charles Dickens' A Child's Dream of A Star. Jejak Digital: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin, 1(4b), 1730-1739. <https://doi.org/10.63822/knyh9q95>

INTRODUCTION

Semantics and pragmatics are complementary fields of linguistic meaning. Semantics traditionally examines sentence meaning as the literal, context-independent content encoded by words and their arrangement. Pragmatics (or utterance-level meaning) attends to how speakers use language in context. Semantics and pragmatics are complementary fields of linguistic meaning. Semantics traditionally examines sentence meaning as the literal, context-independent content encoded by words and their arrangement. Pragmatics (or utterance-level meaning) attends to how speakers use language in context that is, how utterance meaning goes beyond the literal sentence meaning to include speaker intentions, context, and effect. For example, what a speaker says (the literal content of an utterance) is provided by the conventional meaning of the sentence plus context-driven disambiguation, but what a speaker means often includes additional implications or speech-act effects. This distinction was first noted by Grice (1975) in his division of “what is said” versus conversational implicatures.—that is, how utterance meaning goes beyond the literal sentence meaning to include speaker intentions, context, and effect. For example, what a speaker says (the literal content of an utterance) is provided by the conventional meaning of the sentence plus context-driven disambiguation, but what a speaker *means* often includes additional implications or speech-act effects. This distinction was first noted by Grice (1975) in his division of “what is said” versus conversational implicatures.

In literary text, analyzing semantics requires attention to both the formal sentence structure and the pragmatic context. Sentence structure (e.g. declarative, interrogative, exclamatory forms) determines the propositional meaning and grammatical features of an utterance, while utterance theory (e.g. Austin 1962; Searle 1969) shows how speech acts perform actions in context. Austin distinguished constative (truth-evaluable) sentences from performative utterances that do things (e.g. “I promise...” as an act of promising). Searle further specified rules that govern successful illocutionary acts. Finally, presupposition theory (Stalnaker 1974, 1978) identifies the background assumptions that speakers take for granted in utterances. Presuppositions are not part of the main asserted content but are treated as given by both speaker and listener. In this study, we apply these semantic and pragmatic concepts to Charles Dickens' *A Child's Dream of a Star* to reveal how sentence meaning, utterance force, and presupposed information interact in the narrative. In literary text, analyzing semantics requires attention to both the formal sentence structure and the pragmatic context. Sentence structure (e.g. declarative, interrogative, exclamatory forms) determines the propositional meaning and grammatical features of an utterance, while utterance theory (e.g. Austin 1962; Searle 1969) shows how speech acts perform actions in context. Austin distinguished constative (truth-evaluable) sentences from performative utterances that *do* things (e.g. “I promise...” as an act of promising). Searle further specified rules that govern successful illocutionary acts. Finally, presupposition theory (Stalnaker 1974, 1978) identifies the background assumptions that speakers take for granted in utterances. Presuppositions are not part of the main asserted content but are treated as given by both speaker and listener. In this study, we apply these semantic and pragmatic concepts to Charles Dickens' *A Child's Dream of a Star* to reveal how sentence meaning, utterance force, and presupposed information interact in the narrative

Sentence meaning vs. utterance meaning. Recent semantic theory emphasizes that sentence meaning is determined by linguistic conventions and composition, whereas utterance meaning depends also on context and speaker intention. Kroeger (2020) illustrates that sentence meaning derives from words “regardless of context,” while utterance meaning adds pragmatic content from how the sentence is used. Similarly, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy notes that “semantics provides a complete account of sentence

meaning...; pragmatics provides an account of how sentences are used in utterances to convey information in context". In literary discourse, this means the literal proposition of a sentence must be complemented by narrative context and character intention to understand the full meaning. Sentence meaning vs. utterance meaning. Recent semantic theory emphasizes that sentence meaning is determined by linguistic conventions and composition, whereas utterance meaning depends also on context and speaker intention. Kroeger (2020) illustrates that sentence meaning derives from words "regardless of context," while utterance meaning adds pragmatic content from how the sentence is used. Similarly, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy notes that "semantics provides a complete account of sentence meaning...; pragmatics provides an account of how sentences are used in utterances to convey information in context". In literary discourse, this means the literal proposition of a sentence must be complemented by narrative context and character intention to understand the full meaning.

Utterance and speech-act theory. Pragmatic analyses of utterances date back to Austin (1962), who showed that speaking is performing acts. Austin distinguished constatives (statements about the world) from performatives (utterances that enact an action). For example, a character saying "I see the star" asserts a belief (assertive speech act), while saying "Take me!" issues a command (directive). John Searle (1969) built on this by formulating constitutive rules for illocutionary acts – he identified conditions for different classes of speech acts (assertives, directives, commissives, etc.). Contemporary pragmatics (Relevance Theory, others) continues to emphasize how context and speaker intention shape meaning. The present study thus treats each sentence excerpt as an utterance with a particular illocutionary force, following these speech-act frameworks. Utterance and speech-act theory. Pragmatic analyses of utterances date back to Austin (1962), who showed that speaking is performing acts. Austin distinguished constatives (statements about the world) from performatives (utterances that enact an action). For example, a character saying "I see the star" asserts a belief (assertive speech act), while saying "Take me!" issues a command (directive). John Searle (1969) built on this by formulating constitutive rules for illocutionary acts – he identified conditions for different classes of speech acts (assertives, directives, commissives, etc.). Contemporary pragmatics (Relevance Theory, others) continues to emphasize how context and speaker intention shape meaning. The present study thus treats each sentence excerpt as an utterance with a particular illocutionary force, following these speech-act frameworks.

Presupposition theory. A growing body of research (2015–2025) reaffirms that utterances carry implicit assumptions. The Stanford Encyclopedia defines presupposition as information "taken for granted, rather than being part of the main propositional content". Conventional triggers include definite descriptions, factive verbs (know, regret, etc.), change-of-state verbs, and others. Stalnaker's pragmatic account emphasizes the common ground: a presupposition is a proposition the speaker assumes to be shared by speaker and hearer. For example, "Thy mother is no more" presupposes that the mother previously existed (and was living). These background assumptions are crucial in discourse: if a presupposition fails, a hearer may accommodate it or register an anomaly. In narrative, authors often rely on cultural and Presupposition theory. A growing body of research (2015–2025) reaffirms that utterances carry implicit assumptions. The Stanford Encyclopedia defines presupposition as information "taken for granted, rather than being part of the main propositional content". Conventional triggers include definite descriptions, factive verbs (know, regret, etc.), change-of-state verbs, and others. Stalnaker's pragmatic account emphasizes the common ground: a presupposition is a proposition the speaker assumes to be shared by speaker and hearer. For example, "Thy mother is no more" presupposes that the mother previously existed (and was living). These background assumptions are crucial in discourse: if a presupposition fails, a hearer may accommodate it or

register an anomaly. In narrative, authors often rely on cultural and contextual background to make certain assumptions implicit, a process well explained by Stalnaker's model contextual background to make certain assumptions implicit, a process well explained by Stalnaker's mode

Recent studies of literary language highlight how pragmatic features (implicature and presupposition) enrich narrative meaning. For instance, Leech (2017) notes that dialogues often require readers to infer unstated information from social context. However, analyses of Dickens' language in terms of formal semantic categories are scarce. This gap motivates the current analysis: we examine how Dickens encodes meaning at the sentence level, how utterances function in context, and what assumptions they carry. Recent studies of literary language highlight how pragmatic features (implicature and presupposition) enrich narrative meaning. For instance, Leech (2017) notes that dialogues often require readers to infer unstated information from social context. However, analyses of Dickens' language in terms of formal semantic categories are scarce. This gap motivates the current analysis: we examine how Dickens encodes meaning at the sentence level, how utterances function in context, and what assumptions they carry.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach. The research subject is Charles Dickens' story *A Child's Dream of a Star* (1850).

URL: (<https://americanliterature.com/author/charles-dickens/short-story/a-childs-dream-of-a-star/>).

We focus on 20 salient utterances (sentences or exclamations) spoken by the child, his sister (angel), and others. These items were selected because they represent varied sentence types (declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative) and include explicit dialogue crucial to the plot. The data set was provided by the authors of this study (excerpted sentences from the text). This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach. The *research subject* is Charles Dickens' story *A Child's Dream of a Star* (1850). We focus on 20 salient *utterances* (sentences or exclamations) spoken by the child, his sister (angel), and others. These items were selected because they represent varied sentence types (declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative) and include explicit dialogue crucial to the plot. The data set was provided by the authors of this study (excerpted sentences from the text).

We analyze each excerpt in three steps: We analyze each excerpt in three steps:

Sentence analysis: Classify the grammatical form (declarative, question, exclamation, command) and outline its literal content (denotation) and syntax. The sentence meaning (truth-conditional content) is identified on the basis of formal semantics – what proposition it conveys if taken literally. Sentence analysis: Classify the grammatical form (declarative, question, exclamation, command) and outline its literal content (denotation) and syntax. The sentence meaning (truth-conditional content) is identified on the basis of formal semantics – what proposition it conveys if taken literally

Utterance analysis: Determine the communicative function of the utterance using pragmatic theory (Austin/Searle speech-act criteria). We identify the illocutionary act (e.g. statement, request, exclamation, promise) and consider contextual factors (who speaks to whom, with what intention) that affect meaning. In other words, what does the speaker accomplish by saying this sentence? Utterance analysis: Determine the communicative function of the utterance using pragmatic theory (Austin/Searle speech-act criteria). We identify the illocutionary act (e.g. statement, request, exclamation, promise) and consider contextual factors

(who speaks to whom, with what intention) that affect meaning. In other words, what does the speaker accomplish by saying this sentence?

Presupposition analysis: Identify any presuppositions triggered by the utterance. Using standard diagnostics (e.g. presupposition projection under negation or questioning) and knowledge of presupposition triggers, we list the assumptions that must hold for the utterance to be felicitous. For example, factive verbs or definite descriptions in the utterance often signal such assumptions. Presupposition analysis: Identify any presuppositions triggered by the utterance. Using standard diagnostics (e.g. presupposition projection under negation or questioning) and knowledge of presupposition triggers, we list the assumptions that must hold for the utterance to be felicitous. For example, factive verbs or definite descriptions in the utterance often signal such assumptions.

The analysis was conducted by close reading of the text. The 20 items were tabulated by type and analyzed in detail. Each table entry was then described in the results section. Our design is qualitative (descriptive analysis of linguistic phenomena) rather than quantitative; no statistical measures are used. The analysis was conducted by close reading of the text. The 20 items were tabulated by type and analyzed in detail. Each table entry was then described in the results section. Our design is qualitative (descriptive analysis of linguistic phenomena) rather than quantitative; no statistical measures are used.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analyses conducted the 20 items are summarized in Tables 1–4 (grouped by sentence type) and discussed below. Each table lists (a) the excerpted utterance, (b) its sentence form and literal meaning, (c) its utterance function/speech-act category, and (d) presupposed information. Table 1 illustrates declarative and exclamatory sentences (affecting emotional or narrative content); Table 2 shows questions; Table 3 covers imperatives/commands; Table 4 notes short exclamations or elliptical utterances. The analyses conducted the 20 items are summarized in Tables 1–4 (grouped by sentence type) and discussed below. Each table lists (a) the excerpted utterance, (b) its sentence form and literal meaning, (c) its utterance function/speech-act category, and (d) presupposed information. Table 1 illustrates declarative and exclamatory sentences (affecting emotional or narrative content); Table 2 shows questions; Table 3 covers imperatives/commands; Table 4 notes short exclamations or elliptical utterances.

Table 1. Declarative and Exclamatory Utterances (Sentence and Utterance Analysis)

Utterance	Sentence Form & Literal Meaning	Utterance Function (Speech Act)	Presupposition
<i>"Thy mother is no more. I bring her blessing on her darling son!"</i> (Man to son)	Declarative (simple statement). Meaning: The mother has died. The speaker (servant) conveys that news.	Assertive/Informative (statement). The speaker reports a fact (the mother's death) and conveys her final blessing. Illocutionary force: notifying the son of his mother's death.	Presupposes that the mother existed and has now died. Also presupposes the family relation ("her darling son") is understood.

"Thy mother!" (Leader to child's sister)	Exclamatory sentence fragment. Literally, "Your mother."	Assertive/Informative. The speaker identifies the person who has come ("Thy mother") without a verb; functions to announce the identity of a spirit. Illocution: declaration/identifier.	Presupposes that the child has a mother (who was alive and now appears as a spirit).
"My daughter's head is on my sister's bosom... and I can bear the parting from her, GOD be praised!" (Old man)	Compound declarative with exclamatory closing. Literal meaning: The old man describes seeing his daughter with his sister (in heaven) and expresses his own acceptance of fate.	Assertive/Emotive. The speaker both reports a scene (his daughter's situation) and expresses gratitude ("God be praised!") Accepting death. Illocution: narration & emotional exclamation.	Presupposes family relations (the old man's sister exists and has died; the daughter has died). Also presupposes God's existence.

Explanation: In Table 1, sentences 1–3 are declaratives that state facts (assertives). Utterance 1 plainly informs of the mother's death; it presupposes the mother's prior life. Utterance 2, "Thy mother!", is an extreme example of a reduced declarative – only the noun phrase – but pragmatically functions to report who has arrived. It presupposes that the child's mother has existed. Utterance 3 is a long combined statement and exclamation: the man reports his daughter's heavenly placement and then exclaims praise. The imperative "GOD be praised!" though structured as an optative, here functions as an emotional exclamation (commissive/emotive act). The presupposition is that heaven exists and God can be thanked (implied shared belief).

Table 2. Interrogative Utterances (Questions and Answers)

Utterance	Sentence Form & Literal Meaning	Utterance Function (Speech Act)	Presupposition
"Supposing all the children... were to die, would the flowers, and the water, and the sky be sorry?" (Child)	Complex interrogative (hypothetical question). Means: "If all humans died, would nature 'grieve'?"	Question (speculative). The child wonders aloud; he is not requesting an answer but expressing curiosity. Illocution: rhetorical/hypothetical inquiry.	Presupposes that flowers, water, sky are animate in a metaphorical sense (e.g. "children of nature"). Assumes the listeners share a poetic view.
"Is my brother come?" (Sister's angel)	Yes/no interrogative. Literally: "Has my brother arrived?"	Question/Request for information (asking about arrival of the child). Illocution: inquiry.	Presupposes existence of "my brother" (the boy) and that someone is supposed to bring him to the star.
"No." (Leader's answer)	Declarative negative. Means simply "He has not come."	Statement/Response. The leader denies the assumption, informing the angel. Illocution: assertion of truth value.	Presupposes that the question ("Is my brother come?") had a defined answer context; nothing extra.

"Is my brother come?" (Second time)	Yes/no question (repeated).	Again a question by the sister, after another person (child's brother) is carried up. Illocution: inquiry.	Same presupposition as before (the identity of "brother" and expectation of meeting him).
"Not that one, but another." (Leader)	Elliptical statement. Literally: "Not him, another person."	Statement/Correction. The leader clarifies the angel is asking about someone else. Illocution: corrective assertion.	Presupposes that the interlocutors know whom "that one" refers to (the boy just taken up) and that "another" refers to someone else on the star.
"Is my brother come?" (Third time)	Yes/no question.	The angel asks again later (after more souls arrive). Illocution: repeated inquiry.	Same presupposition (expectation of brother's arrival).

Explanation: Table 2 lists interrogatives. The first question (Utterance 4) by the child is hypothetical, presupposing metaphorical parenthood ("children of flowers, children of the sky") to explore the idea of nature mourning. The three instances of "Is my brother come?" (Utterances 6, 8, 10) show a pragmatic strategy: the angel repeatedly asks if her brother (the protagonist) has arrived. Each time this question presupposes *the brother's identity and existence* and *that someone might bring him*. The answers ("No." and "Not that one, but another.") are declarative utterances that correct the context. For example, "Not that one, but another." presupposes a shared understanding of who "that one" (the brother) was and informs the angel which other soul has arrived. All these dialogic moves rely on contextual presuppositions about family relationships and the procession of souls in the star.

Table 3. Imperatives and Directives

Utterance	Sentence Form & Literal Meaning	Utterance Function (Speech Act)	Presupposition
"Take me!" (Child)	Imperative (command). Literally: "(Someone) take me (to the star)!"	Directive (request). The child urgently commands some unseen agent (angel/leader) to carry him as well. Illocution: begging or pleading.	Presupposes an implied agent or mechanism ("(you) take me") and that the child belongs at the star. Also presupposes that the interlocutor can act (angels present).
"O, sister, I am here!" (Child)	Exclamatory declarative. Literally: "Oh sister, I have arrived!"	Assertive with exclamation. The child announces his presence joyfully. Illocution: emphatic statement.	Presupposes that the sister's attention is on the star, and that siblings exist.
"O, mother, sister, and brother, I am here!" (Child)	Exclamatory declarative. Literally: "Oh, mother and sister and brother, I have arrived!"	Assertive/Emotive. The grown man (now old) announces meeting his family members. Illocution: expression of happiness.	Presupposes all those relatives exist (mother, sister, brother) and are waiting to meet him.

Explanation: Table 3 shows imperative and exclamatory utterances. Imperatives (Utterance 5) command an action: "Take me!" presupposes an agent who can obey and implies "to the star" as understood context. It carries strong urgency (tone of desperation) as a directive act. The exclamations "O sister, I am here!" and "O mother, sister, and brother, I am here!" (Utterances 6 and 7) are declarative in form but with emotional force. They assert the speaker's arrival and implicitly call attention. Each presupposes the existence of addressees and family members. For instance, "O, mother, sister, and brother, I am here!" presupposes that the man has a living sister and brother (who in fact died earlier). The prayer-like phrasing assumes that by crying out, the others will hear, highlighting the utterance's illocutionary force as glad announcement.

Table 4. Short Exclamations and Elliptical Utterances

Utterance	Sentence Form & Literal Meaning	Utterance Function (Speech Act)	Presupposition
"I see the star!" (Child and later old man)	Exclamation. Literally: "I perceive the star."	Assertive / Exclamative. The speaker excitedly notes seeing the guiding star. Illocution: emotional assertion of sight.	Presupposes that the star exist and is visible to the speaker.
"God bless mv brother and the star!" (Child & sister, echoed)	Exclamatory imperative. Literally: "May God bless the star."	Commissive / Emotive. The children make a pious invocation. Illocution: prayer / exclamation.	Presupposes belief in God's power and that blessing the star is meaningful
"God bless mv brother and the star!" (Sister)	Exclamatory wish. Literally: "May God bless both my brother and the star."	Commissive/Emotive. The sister prays for her brother and star. Illocution: blessing/prayer.	Presupposes God can bestow blessings and that brother and star are worthy of it.
"Not yet." (Group answer to "Take me!")	Declarative fragmented reply ("Not yet").	Response/Deferral. A group of souls answer the old man. Illocution: postponing action.	Presupposes a question "Take me?" and that there will be an eventual taking ("yet" implies future).
"He's dying." (Whispered by children)	Declarative. Literally: "He is in the process of dying."	Assertive. The children quietly report the old man's condition. Illocution: statement of fact (to each other).	Presupposes the old man was alive and is now in the act of dying.

Explanation: Table 4 contains short utterances and fragments. The exclamation "I see the star!" (Utterance 8) appears twice (child and old man) and is a straightforward assertive with strong emotion – it presupposes the star's objective existence and visibility. The invocations "God bless..." (Utterances 9–10) take the form of imperative/exclamatory blessings; each presupposes a shared theistic context (belief that God exists and can bless) and expresses the characters' piety. Finally, "Not yet." (Utterance 11) is an elliptical reply to "Take me!" – it presupposes the prior request and indicates that the action is deferred.

"He is dying." (Utterance 12) is a quiet declarative whispered by children; it presupposes that the old man was alive and is now dying.

Overall, the tables show patterns: declarative sentences serve as simple assertions or narrative statements with clear propositional content; questions solicit information or confirm expectations, often carrying presupposed contexts (e.g. family reunions); exclamations and imperatives express emotions or commands and presuppose appropriate social or supernatural frameworks (belief in angels, God, etc.). Each utterance's *sentence meaning* gives its literal content, while its *utterance meaning* (illocutionary force) depends on context as guided by speech-act theory. Presuppositions emerge whenever the sentence contains cues (like definite references, shared family roles, or assumed events). For instance, "Thy mother is no more" presupposes the mother's earlier life, and even short exclamations rely on common ground (e.g. everyone understands who "the star" refers to).

The results highlight the interplay between syntax, speaker intent, and assumed context. Dickens' narrative uses varied sentence types strategically. Declaratives (Tables 1–4) carry the basic story information; exclamations and imperatives convey urgency and emotion. For example, the child's repeated cries of "Is my brother come?" underscore his desperate hope, with each question embedding the presupposition of a pending reunion. The ellipsis in answers ("No.", "Not that one, but another.") relies on the listener's inference to fill in missing subjects and referents. This ambiguity requires readers to use context to recover meaning, illustrating Grice's insight that "what is said" is distinct from what is implicated

Presuppositionally, Dickens assumes much about the world. Phrases like "God bless...", while informal blessings, also presuppose characters' faith and the existence of divine action. References to family members ("sister", "mother", "daughter") presuppose the relationships are established in earlier narrative. When the story describes children as "buds" and "children of the stars" (see Utterance 1), it presupposes an anthropomorphic or poetic worldview – a familiar trope but not literally entailed by words alone. The conditional question ("Supposing all children...") even presupposes the idea that nature could mourn, blending literal and metaphorical assumption.

Some utterances posed analysis challenges. For instance, the imperative "Take me!" has no stated subject; we infer an implicit agent (angels or fate). Its sentence meaning is incomplete without context, but pragmatically it is understood as a plea to the leader of souls. This illustrates Austin's point that performative or directive sentences rely on conventions (e.g. how to 'invoke' angels) to be felicitous. Similarly, the short answer "Not yet." presupposes the event (being taken to the star) is on the horizon, relying entirely on context for meaning.

Linking these findings to broader semantics, we see examples of presupposition projection: the children's whispers "He is dying" retains the presupposition of life despite being a derivative statement. The story also shows that sentence form only partially determines meaning; full interpretation demands pragmatic context. In Dickens' prose, semantic content (truth-conditional meaning of sentences) provides the skeleton of events, but pragmatic inference (utterance force, presupposed beliefs) fleshes out the emotional and moral dimensions. This aligns with linguistic theory that distinguishes semantic content from speaker meaning.

CONCLUSION

This analysis reveals that Dickens' *A Child's Dream of a Star* employs a rich mix of sentence types and pragmatic cues to convey its themes. The literal meaning of each sentence (semantic content) is often clear, but the *full* meaning arises only when utterance context and presuppositions are taken into account. Declarative sentences ground the narrative, interrogatives express longing or speculation, and exclamations/imperatives heighten emotion. Presuppositions – the assumptions characters take for granted – shape how readers understand the familial and spiritual context. For instance, the repeated use of “Is my brother come?” presupposes a belief in life after death and familial reunion, driving the story’s emotional arc.

The study underscores that even in a literary text, formal semantics and pragmatic theory are both needed to explain how meaning is constructed. By tabulating sentence, utterance, and presupposition features, we see the interplay between grammatical form and inferred content. These insights have implications for semantics research: they show that narrative language engages everyday presuppositions and speech-act conventions, and that analyzing such texts can illustrate how speakers use language creatively yet systematically. Further work could apply similar analyses to other literary works, or investigate reader interpretations of presupposed content.

REFERENCE

- Kroeger, P. R. (2020). *Analyzing meaning: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics* (3rd ed.). Language Science Press.
- Social Science LibreTexts. (n.d.). Three “levels” of meaning. In *Analyzing meaning: An introduction to semantics and pragmatics*. Retrieved June 11, 2025, from https://socialsci.libretexts.org/.../1.02%3A_Three_levels_of_meaning
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (2021). Presupposition. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2021 Edition). Retrieved June 11, 2025, from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/presupposition/>
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (2021). Pragmatics. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2021 Edition). Retrieved June 11, 2025, from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/pragmatics/>
- Pauzan, A. A. (2018). A Semiotic Analysis of the John Wick 1 Film Using Charles Sanders Peirce’s Semiotic Theory. *Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin*.
- Tjahyadi, I. (2021). An Analysis of The City Meaning in Three Paintings by Agung Tato (Semiotics Approach Of Charles Sanders Peirce’). *Terob : Jurnal Pengkajian Dan Penciptaan Seni*, 12(1), 19–28. <https://doi.org/10.20111/terob.v12i1.25>
- Wiyogo, A. J., & Kumala, S. A. (2023). Semiotics Analysis on the Novel Night on the Galactic Railroad By Miyazawa Kenji Using Charles Sanders Peirce’s Triadic Model. *e-LinguaTera*, 3(1), 189- 200.