

ANALYSING PRESUPPOSITION: A STUDY ON PRESIDENT AKUFO-ADDO'S STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS (SONA), 2022

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Abstract

Presupposition can be said to be an assumption of a speaker prior to making an utterance or an implied claim of an utterance. Using qualitative method, the researchers examined various language structures that give rise to presuppositions. This was pursued by exploring the State of the Nation Address (SONA) delivered by President Akufo-Addo of Ghana on 30th March 2022. The analysis of the SONA, as the data of the study, revealed the utilization of a number of presupposition triggers – such as possessive construction, “one” construction, definite noun phrase, adverbial clause, relative clause, “even” construction, iteratives, change of state verbs, and factive verbs or phrases – under the existential, structural and lexical presuppositions. The article thus opines that the enactment of presuppositions, through the identified forms, affords the President the opportunity to disseminate his message with a higher degree of veracity on the conditions and happenings of the Ghanaian state.

Keywords: *presupposition; presupposition triggers; sona; speech; utterance*

1. Introduction

Presidential speeches or addresses constitute important data to be studied in varied disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. They have been used, by various presidents, as a powerful tool of communication for nation building, governance and national development. These special messages are presented in various forms to meet specific demands of the political leadership of a president. For example, they can be used to outline and develop the president's vision and direction of commitment in the form of investiture speeches; to give a report at the end of the president's tenure in office in the form of farewell speeches; to inspire hope and a sense of direction in the form of crisis speeches; to explain various measures taken by government in the form of policy speeches; and to give a regular account of the stewardship of the president in the form of state of the nation addresses.

In most countries, state of the nation addresses (SONAs) are considered integral in state governance, in order to ensure accountability on the part of the executive president and his/her government. With this in mind, SONA is made a constitutional provision or a requirement by law in such countries. In Ghana, for example, Article 67 of the 1992 Constitution stipulates that “the President shall, at the beginning of each session of

Parliament and before dissolution of Parliament, deliver to Parliament a message on the state of the nation". Consequently, Ghanaian presidents are enjoined by law to give reports on the conditions and happenings of the Ghanaian state to the representatives of the people, and by extension to the people. Considering the stature of SONAs in national development, Ghanaians calmly anticipate their presentation and discuss the expected thematic areas to be presented, especially in the media landscape.

In view of the foregoing background, the present study analyses presupposition in the state of the nation address (SONA) delivered by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, on 30th March, 2022 on the floor of the 8th Parliament of the 4th Republic. As presuppositions are not explicitly stated but implied out of what is stated (Reah, 2002), this study is set out to identify some mechanisms, structures or forms that enact them in a communicative piece of national importance such as the SONA, and suggest some functions.

2. Literature Review

Presupposition emerged as a concept from the German philosopher and logician, Gottlob Frege, in 1892 (Khaleel, 2010). It was studied in the field of language philosophy and introduced later into the field of linguistics (Liang & Liu, 2016). Since its emergence, presupposition has been widely viewed in ordinary language as an assumption, as Saeed (1997) for example explains; that to presuppose simply means to assume. Yule (1996) expands this position by positing that, it is the assumption of the speaker before making an utterance. It is also seen as a language property that is used in the enactment of the formation and molding of various ideologies of an audience (Liang & Liu, 2016). Zare (2012) opines that the utilization of presupposition triggers can influence the audience's interpretation of events and may cause some biases. This makes the study of presupposition an interesting venture in the area of language use.

Saeed (1997: 102-106) presents two main approaches of presupposition in linguistics: the truth value and the interactional. The truth value approach characterizes or defines sentences by their "truth relations"; that is, their certainty of being factual. The interactional approach, on the other hand, puts sentences in the domain of communication between individuals; that is, sentences occur as a result of interactions. Accordingly, the truth value approach and the interactional approach are, respectively, described as semantic presupposition and pragmatic presupposition (Leech, 1981).

The literature – e.g., Alcarza (1999), Simons (2003), and Stalnaker (1974) – makes it abundantly clear that presupposition is very sensitive to context and that it should be studied from a pragmatic perspective or approach. For Stalnaker (1974; 1998), in particular, presupposition is fundamentally pragmatic and, concurring with this; Alcarza (1999) observes that presupposition demands a certain common ground of understanding between the speaker and the listener in order to realize the full import of what is stated. Therefore, presupposition in this sense can be analysed from the speaker's viewpoint as a way of packaging an utterance and from the listener's viewpoint as an inference or implied meaning of what the speaker has stated (Saeed, 1997).

The concept of presupposition has been studied in varied areas of language use, such as journalistic writings (Bonyadi & Samuel, 2011; Gyimah Manu, 2020; Gyimah Manu et al., 2022; Khaleel, 2010; Yingfang, 2007) and speeches or addresses (Abdulabbas, 2020; Al-Smaiheeyen & Latiff, 2018; Ampong, 2011; Liang & Liu, 2016). Liang & Liu (2016) examine presupposition triggers in Hilary Clinton's first speech at a political rally, bringing out how

they are used to push her political agenda. Al-Smaihiyeen and Latiff (2018) focus on how lexical presupposition is employed in some speeches by the King of Jordan, His Royal Majesty Abdullah II (bin Al Hussein). They explicate how lexical items are used to reveal the King's intentions and ideas on some political issues in Europe and the world. Abdulabbas (2020) also analyses how the concept of presupposition is evidenced in some selected speeches of President Donald Trump. He notes that the concept is used to showcase the President's knowledge of the socio-politics of America and the American people. Ampong (2011) also employs presupposition as a tool to analyse the unsaid in John Jerry Rawlings' (a former President of the Republic of Ghana) 2010 speech at the national congress of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), a leading political party in Ghana. The present study unravels various linguistic mechanisms that are used to convey some claims, in an unstated manner, in the SONA by President Akufo-Addo, during, arguably, one of the difficult times of the Ghanaian state, in its recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Research Method

As stated above, the data for the present study are the SONA delivered by President Akufo-Addo in March 2022. The present study adopted a qualitative approach in order to achieve the overarching aim of the study. The researchers watched the audio-visual format of the SONA to have a general understanding of it. Furthermore, the text format was read alongside the audio-visual to get a fuller acquaintance to it. With these, the researchers were conversant to start the identification of the linguistic forms that enacted presuppositions in the data.

The text of the data was printed and read in several short blocks to identify the said elements. The researchers examined the data by looking out for the presupposition triggers identified in the works of Yule (1996), Khaleel (2010), and Bonyadi and Samuel (2011). The triggers that were identified were typed out with their associative presupposed meanings, and grouped under the three main types of presupposition (i.e., existential, lexical and structural) given in Khaleel's (2010) model of presuppositional analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis of the President's SONA reveals some linguistic units and structures that give rise to what Yule (1996: 27) and Saeed (1997: 106) respectively term "potential presupposition" and "presupposition triggers". These linguistic elements are put under the three broad forms of presupposition – existential, structural, and lexical – as exemplified in Khaleel (2010). For the analysis, "presupposes" is marked by ">>" as convention demands and the part of the construction that is principally triggering the presupposition put in italics.

4.1 Existential Presupposition

With existential presupposition, speakers assume the existence of an entity named in an utterance. Consider, for example, "Mary's brother bought three horses" (Yule, 1996: 25). This sentence presupposes that there is someone called Mary and that she has a brother who has bought three horses. The speaker therefore assumes the existence of Mary and her brother. For Yule (1996) and Khaleel (2010), presupposition of existence forms the basis of presupposition. In our analysis of the SONA, it becomes evident that the President uses possessive constructions, definite descriptions and "one" constructions to presuppose the existence of entities so named.

4.1.1 Possessive Constructions

Possessive constructions are phrases that indicate ownership of an entity (the possessed) to another (the possessor). The use of possessive constructions, normally, triggers the assumption of the existence of who/what is named in their linguistic environment (Yule, 1996). The analysis of the SONA reveals the dominant use of "our" by the President to disseminate the sense of collective ownership of the entities named by the President to his listeners; i.e., the parliamentarians and the entire people of Ghana, as exemplified with some examples in (1) – (5) below:

1. We had to learn some very hard lessons, and *our belief in the need for self-sufficiency* was reinforced when vaccine nationalism was played out blatantly by the rich and powerful countries >> We [Ghanaians] have a belief in the need for self-sufficiency.
2. Mr. Speaker, thirty percent (30%) of *our wheat flour and fertilizer imports* come from Russia >> We [Ghanaians] have imports of wheat flour and fertilizer.
3. *Our national iconic automobile brand*, the Kantanka brand produced by Kantanka Automobile Company Ltd. >> We [Ghanaians] have an iconic automobile brand.
4. If ever the support of all citizens was required to make something work, it is in the battle to end illegal mining, and restore *our lands and water bodies* to health>> We [Ghanaians] have lands and water bodies.
5. We should use *our Chairmanship and membership of ECOWAS, our membership of the African Union, our membership of the Commonwealth, our membership of La Francophonie, and our position as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council* to advance these goals >> We [Ghanaians] have chairmanship and membership at ECOWAS, memberships at the African Union, Commonwealth, La Francophonie and non-permanent membership at the UN Security Council.

(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

In the examples above, the President relates the ownership of the items listed to all Ghanaians and this may resultantly arouse the senses of unity, oneness and collective responsibility amongst the leadership of the country and the citizenry. This may invariably create some level of congeniality in the President's message to his audience, the Ghanaian people. In some other instances in the data, the use of "our" directs the portrayal of collectiveness amongst the President and his government, as the following from the data (6 – 8) shows.

6. We were on course, and *our performance* between 2017 and the beginning of 2020 demonstrates we were making rapid progress >> We [the NPP government] have been having a progressive performance.
7. Mr. Speaker, we have kept to *our promise*, and kept the lights on in spite of worldwide upheavals in the energy sector, and in spite of the huge legacy debts we inherited >> We [the NPP government] had a promise.
8. We are on course to achieve *our ambition of universal access to electricity by the end of my term as the President of this country* >>We

[the NPP government] have the ambition of universal access to electricity by the end of the President's tenure.

(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

The use of the *apostrophe* /s/ ('s) to denote possession is also seen in the data, as the examples in (9) – (10) demonstrate. In this case, the listener may take the presupposing parts as true as the existence of the entities in them is guaranteed.

9. Mr. Speaker, as part of *Government's "Water for All" programme*, several water systems have been initiated and are at various stages of completion >> Government has a "Water for All" programme.

10. Mr. Speaker, *Government's commitment* to constructing a modern railway network in our country is gradually bearing fruit >> Government has a commitment to construct a modern railway network in Ghana.

(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

4.1.2 "One" Construction

This is so named because it is a structured cluster of words preceded by "one" (Gyimah Manu, 2020), specifically 'one + of + a definite description' (e.g. one + of + the dangers of having law enforcement officers involving in such anomalies). It presupposes the existence of other forms of the item, object, or phenomenon being talked about. Some specific examples from the President's SONA are given in (11) – (13) below:

11. ... we recorded average annual GDP growth rates of 7%, making us *one of the fastest growing economies in the world* >> There are other fastest growing economies in the world we can be compared to.

12. Not many people outside the cocoa industry will realise the significance of the introduction of this little bit of technology, but it brings to an end *one of the main sources of distrust between cocoa farmers and officialdom* >> There are other main sources of distrust between cocoa farmers and officialdom.

13. Mr. Speaker, potentially, *one of the most decisive interventions of the 2022 budget* has been the YouStart Programme, which has been established to encourage the development of entrepreneurship amongst the youth >> There are other most decisive interventions of the 2022 budget.

(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

From (11) – (13), it can be seen that the President strives to portray a degree of veracity of information with the use of the "one" construction. That is, advertently, its presupposed meaning also acknowledges the truth of the existence of another form of the noun element in the construction. One realizes the extent to which the "one" construction imputes veracity when they are omitted in some cases. For instance, consider its omission in (11) to read as in (14) below:

14. ... we recorded average annual GDP growth rates of 7%, making us the fastest growing economy in the world.

(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

It is evident that, unlike (11), (14) presupposes only one “fastest growing economy in the world” and this may cause some level of doubt in the minds of the audience. In other words, (14) may not strongly avow the correctness that the President may want to communicate to the populace. However, the “one” construction affords the President the opportunity to make his point as true, through the assumption of other correct forms.

4.1.3 Definite Noun Phrase/Descriptions

The definite noun phrase (NP) may be considered to be a structured string of words with a noun head and preceded by definite determiner, “the”. This phrase, as exemplified in the data (15) – (20), also presupposes the existence of the noun element, particularly the head, in the group of words. The definite NP asserts the truth value of the propositions presupposed and the listeners are made to accept their meanings as true. Examples are presented below:

15. ...we were in the midst of a lockdown in *the main metropolitan centres* of our country >> We have main metropolitan centres.
16. *The big and established economies* of the world have been knocked off their planned trajectory >> We have big and established economies
17. *The difficulties of the time* notwithstanding, we intend to continue to grow this economy and bring prosperity >> We have difficulties.
18. *The initial phase for the construction of nine (9) TVET campuses* will commence next month >> There are phases in the construction of the TVET campuses.
19. This is a remarkable initiative that cushions the income of the Ghanaian cocoa farmer, *the backbone of our economy* >> Our country has a backbone [the Ghanaian cocoa farmer].
20. *The construction of the twenty-two kilometre section of the Western Railway Line, ...* >> The Western Railway Line has twenty-two kilometre section.

(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

4.2 Structural Presupposition

According to Yule (1996), there are certain sentence structures that are normally analysed and assumed to be true. He adds that “we might say that speakers can use such structures to treat information as presupposed (i.e., assumed to be true) and hence to be accepted as true by the listener” (p. 28). For instance, with the wh-interrogative construction, “What did he eat?”, the presupposition is that “He ate/he has eaten”. Other linguistic structures that assume their part to be true in the data are adverbial clause, relative clause, wh-construction, “even” construction, parenthetical construction, and counterfactive conditionals (Bonyadi & Samuel, 2011; Khaleel, 2010).

4.2.1 Adverbial Clause

An adverbial clause is a dependent clause that serves the purpose of being an adverbial modifier of the verb in the independent clause to which it (the adverbial clause) is attached. Just like any other adverb, they possess some freedom in their positioning as they are mostly placed at the initial or final positions of a sentence (Biber et al., 1999). Subordinate clauses that function as stated above can give rise to presupposition. The adverbial clause of the sentence, “She wrote the book *when she lived in Boston*”

presupposes that “She lived in Boston” (Khaleel, 2010: 534). Consider these examples culled from the data.

21. *When some amongst us are raising questions about the certainties on which we are building the state*, it is not surprising that worries about the stability of the government would become cause for heightened tension in the nation >> Some amongst us are raising questions about the certainties on which we are building the state.
 22. Back in March 2020 *when the first cases of COVID hit our country*, we and the rest of the world were in uncharted territory >> The first cases of COVID hit our country.
 23. We had to learn some very hard lessons, and our belief in the need for self-sufficiency was reinforced *when vaccine nationalism was played out blatantly by the rich and powerful countries* >> Vaccine nationalism was played out blatantly by the rich and powerful countries.
 24. Some, including a few in this Honourable House, went as far as to accuse the government of trying to kill Ghanaian children *when we introduced the controlled school re-openings* >> We introduced the controlled school re-openings.
 25. Mr. Speaker, I recall, with nostalgia, the end of year 2019, just before the onset of COVID, *when the world came to Ghana in that “December to Remember”* and we were the place to be >> The world came to Ghana in that “December to Remember”.
 26. Work is also ongoing on the construction of a huge barracks complex at Kwabenya, to replace the one adjacent to the DVLA at 37, *where the conditions of living are poor* >> The conditions of living are poor.
- (SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

As noted earlier, the adverbial clause functions as a modifier of the main verb in the main clause to which it is attached. Therefore, as could be observed from (21) – (26), the presupposed meaning that is gleaned from the adverbial clause is naturally carried unto the main proposition, the independent clause, as true of it (the independent clause).

4.2.2 Relative Clause

The relative clause is a dependent clause that functions as a post-modifier of an antecedent NP. Examples of such subordinate clauses presupposing in (27) – (30) are represented below:

27. Mr. Speaker, I hope you will forgive me if I begin by asking Members of the House to join me to salute the management, technical and playing teams of the Black Stars, *who, against the odds, beat the Super Eagles of Nigeria in Abuja yesterday* >> The Black Stars beat the Super Eagles of Nigeria in Abuja yesterday.
28. The Creative Arts Senior High School, in Kwadaso, *whose construction is currently seventy percent (70%) complete*, will serve as a beacon for many young and talented people >> The construction of the Creative Arts Senior High School, in Kwadaso, is currently seventy (70%) complete.

29. In addition, five (5) medium scale state-of-the-art agro-processing Common-User Facilities (CUFs) have been established with direct support from Government and are owned by various groups of farmers, *whose farming operations had previously been undermined through lack of processing facilities* >> The farming operations of various groups of farmers had been previously undermined through the lack of processing facilities.
30. Mr. Speaker, work is progressing on the coastal protection programme of Government, *whose aim is to improve the resilience of the country's coastline against tidal wave erosion*, whilst protecting lives, livelihoods and properties of the people living along the coast >> The aim of the coastal protection programme of Government is to improve the resilience of the country's coastline against tidal wave erosion.
(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

As seen in the examples, these clauses project some claims, which are seen as facts, or as if as facts, about their antecedents on the part of the audience.

4.2.3 Wh-Construction

This is a group of words that are preceded by a wh-word that is capable of interrogating. As noted by scholars such as Yule (1996), Biber et. al. (1999) and Khaleel (2010), such cluster of words may presuppose in their usage. Examples from our data are given in (31) – (33) below.

31. Maybe some of us have forgotten *what the experts were predicting at the time* >> The experts were making some predictions at the time.
32. ... we work hard to reclaim *what we lost to the COVID years* >> We lost something to the COVID years.
33. Mr. Speaker, I have spoken on other occasions about the digitization of port operations or *what we all now call the paperless port* >> We now call something [programme or project] the paperless port
(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

The presupposed meanings, from the wh-constructions given above, are claims that are implied, by the audience, to be true at the time the utterance is made. Specifically, the audience may be more inclined to be convinced and consequently accept the presupposed statement as accurate.

4.2.4 "Even" Construction

This construction is so named because it is a group of words that is introduced by the word, "even" (Bonyadi & Samuel, 2011). The use of "even" in groups of words may trigger presupposition, as found from the data below:

34. The Ghanaian people are anxious about the economy, the cost of living, income levels, jobs for young people, and *even about issues on which we all thought we had achieved a national consensus* >> The Ghanaian people are not expected to be anxious about issues on which a national consensus was thought to have been achieved

35. We could not have been prepared for the catastrophe that hit us, *even the richest economies with the most sophisticated structures were unprepared* >> The richest economies with the most sophisticated structure were expected to be prepared
36. Identifying suitable sites around the country, for example, has turned out to be *even more problematic than had been anticipated* >> Identifying suitable sites around the country should not have been a problem
37. The bombs might be dropping on cities half a world away but they are hitting our pockets here in Ghana. *Even so, we have managed to ensure that fuel supplies have not been disrupted, unlike in several other parts of the world* >> It is not expected to be able to manage the disruption of fuel supplies like other parts of the world
(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

It can be seen that the “even” construction offers the President the opportunity to state, indirectly, claims that could not have been made in a more direct manner because of its import and potential reaction from the audience. It is therefore used as an avoidance strategy to directly make strong statements such as the presupposed meanings in the examples given.

4.2.5 Parenthetical Constructions

Parenthetical constructions are sentential add-ons that relate to clauses to which they are attached. Their function is to give further clarification or information to the main proposition stated (Banik, 2009). Walker (1823: 99) adds that their addition to the sentence “is neither necessary to the sense, nor at all affects the construction”. Such have been identified as structures that can trigger presupposition (Bonyadi & Samuel, 2011; Gyimah Manu, 2020). Examples from the data are found below:

38. I remember, a year ago, we were in the midst of the second wave of covid infections and deaths; *there was widespread fear*; again, there was consensus we should concentrate all attention and resources on protecting lives >> There was widespread fear in the midst of the second wave of covid infections and deaths a year ago.
39. We grew the economy from the cedi equivalent of fifty-four billion United States dollars (\$54 billion) at the end of 2016 to the cedi equivalent of seventy-two billion dollars (\$72 billion) in 2020, *a thirty-three percent (33%) increase* >> There was a thirty-three (33%) increase in the economy at the end of 2016.
40. Each of the different branches of the Armed Forces – *the Army, Navy and Airforce* – has received significant financial assistance to upgrade its logistical bases, and strengthen its capabilities, and its welfare requirements are being substantially addressed >> The Army, Navy and Airforce are different branches of the Armed Forces.
41. The West African Region is suddenly back in the international headline news for all the wrong reasons; *we are back again as the region of political instability and the place for coups* >> Political instability and

coups are wrong reasons for the West African Region to be back in the news headlines.

42. We, in Ghana, know the cost of instability; *it leads to the exodus of our artisans and professionals, and the emptying of teachers from our schools* >> The cost of instability is the exodus of artisans and professionals, and the emptying of teachers from our schools.

(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

It should be noted that the parentheticals in the examples given are not merely used to offer further clarity to their independent clause but are also used to present additional evidences or actualities about the said clause through their presupposed information.

4.2.6 Counter Factive Conditionals

The presupposed information of the counter factive conditionals are not said to be true at the time in which an utterance is made. Yule (1996) deems them as constructions that are contrary to facts with his explanation of the example, "If I had a yacht". The sentence, "I had a yacht" may be considered a fact. However, the placement of "if" before the pronoun subject in the earlier example renders it as contrary to facts as in "I do not have a yacht". Below are some examples, from the data:

43. Mr. Speaker, *if we campaign* so hard for the opening up of trading among African states, we had better have something to sell >> We have not campaigned so hard for the opening up of trading among African states
44. *If ever the support of all citizens was required to make something work*, it is in the battle to end illegal mining, and restore our lands and water bodies to health >> The support of all citizens have not been required to make something work but now
45. Mr. Speaker, I hope you will forgive me *if I begin* by asking Members of the House to join me to salute the management, technical and playing teams of the Black Stars >> Members of the House have not been asked to salute the management, technical and playing teams of the Black Stars

(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

4.3 Lexical Presupposition

This is where certain words or lexical items give rise to assumptions. In English language use, examples of such lexical items that have been identified by scholars include: implicative verbs, factive verbs, change of state verbs, verbs of judging, non-factive verbs, conventional items, and iteratives (Khaleel, 2010; Saeed, 1997; Yule, 1996). Some of these are employed in the data analysed, as presented below.

4.3.1 Factive Verbs/Phrases

Crystal (1997) opines that the word "factive" is used for the class of verbs that allow complement clauses to be attached to them. In this case, the addresser is able to assume or presuppose the factiveness or truth value of the proposition given through the clause. Verbs in this category include: *know*, *realize*, and *regret* (Abdulabbas, 2020; Liang & Liu, 2016; Yule, 1996). Yule (1996) also includes the use of some adjectives and other noun constructions for

this purpose. In the data, the researchers identify the use of both factive verbs and some factive adjectival phrases. Examples are presented below.

46. ... *I know* that there is a general sense of anxiety in our nation at the moment >> There is a general sense of anxiety in our nation at the moment
47. When some amongst us are raising questions about the certainties on which we are building the state, *it is not surprising* that worries about the stability of the government would become cause for heightened tension in the nation>> Worries about the stability of the government has become cause for heightened tension in the nation
48. ... *it is evident* that the initial schedule we gave for the completion of Agenda 111 was overly ambitious >> The initial schedule we gave for the completion of Agenda 111 was overly ambitious
49. I *know* that the word “unprecedented” is often used with careless abandon in our public discourse, but I use it carefully and purposefully>> The word “unprecedented” is often used with careless abandon in our public discourse
50. Gradually, the police are bringing order to the roads and we all now *know* that the law is no respecter of persons or vehicle types >> The law is no respecter of person or vehicle types
 (SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

It can be seen from the above examples that the “that-clauses” that proceed immediately after the factive verbs and adjectival phrases contain the presupposed meanings. The use of these factive verbs and phrases transfer or confer on the clauses some high degree of veracity of the propositions presented by the clauses. For example, in (49), the President notes, through the verb “know” the truth value that “the word “unprecedented” is often used with careless abandon in our public discourse”. The presupposed meanings are given as factual.

4.3.2 Iteratives

For Crystal (1997: 206), iterative refers to “an event which takes place repeatedly”. Words or phrases that denote the repetitive nature of an action or event are called iteratives (Khaleel, 2010). Examples of such have been given from the data.

51. ... *again* there was consensus we should concentrate all attention and resources on protecting lives >> A consensus was once reached (was reached before) that we should concentrate all our attention and resources on protecting lives
52. Our children *will continue* to be educated and be equipped to run a modern and digitalized economy >> Our children are being educated and equipped to run a modern and digitalized economy
53. Ghana *continues* to lead the push for African renaissance through the decade-long ‘Beyond the Return Project’ >> Ghana has been leading the push for African renaissance through the decade-long ‘Beyond the Return Project’

54. We [the West African Region] are back *again* as the region of political instability and the place for coups >> The region has been one of political instability and the place for coups before
(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

The use of the iteratives in the examples above presupposes the repetitive occurrence or happening of the events or actions expressed. These events or actions are therefore believed to be truths, having existed or occurred. The phrases “no longer” and “never again” are identified as *negative iterative*. Although they signal the repetition of an occurrence, they also express the end of same. Consider the examples below:

55. As the health experts have advised, I hope we shall continue with some of the measures, like the washing of hands and the enhanced hygiene protocols, that have served us so well even though they are *no longer* mandatory >> Measures like washing of hands and the enhanced hygiene protocols have been mandatory before
56. *Never again* will it be that someone, born in this country, will live a full life, die and be buried, without any record of his or her existence >> Some people have been born, lived life, died and buried without their records of existence
(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

4.3.3 Change of State Verbs

These verbs have the sense that the new state that is described or presupposed is not held before the change (Saeed, 1997). Examples from the data are given below:

57. Work has *started* at eighty-seven (87) of the one hundred and eleven (111) sites >> There was no work earlier on the one hundred and eleven (111) sites.
58. Trading under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) officially *commenced* on 1st January, 2021, and Ghana was the first country in Africa to establish Customs Procedure Codes to facilitate trading under the AfCFTA >> There was no official trading under the AfCFTA earlier.
59. Mr. Speaker, quite a number of global vehicle manufacturing companies have set up assembly plants here in our country, and *started producing* vehicles for our market and for the West African market >> There were no vehicle manufacturing companies who had assembly plants here in our country for the production of vehicles for our markets and that of West Africa before
60. We have *suspended* the issuance of all prospecting, exploration and/or reconnaissance licenses for minerals in forest reserves >> There was the issuance of prospecting, exploration and/or reconnaissance licenses for minerals in forest reserves
61. The construction of the twenty-two-kilometre section of the Western Railway Line, on a new standard gauge, from Kojokrom to Manso, which *commenced* in 2018, is on schedule to be completed before the end of this year >> There was no construction of the twenty-two-kilometer section of the Western Railway Line before
(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

The President employs some change of state verbs, as exemplified above, to convey some of his accomplishments to the citizenry. These verbs presuppose the non-existence of these changes, in this case accomplishments, prior to their occurrence or realization. They therefore serve as appropriate vehicles for such announcements, because of their presupposed meanings, especially in addresses such as the SONA.

4.4 Conventional Items

In some cases, presuppositions in some sentences are tied to the conventional meanings of words (Levinson, 1983). Palmer (1981) reiterates this by noting that presuppositions are connected with the nature of certain words. The sentence, "I killed the dog" presupposes that, conventionally, "The dog was alive [before]". The verb "killed" triggers a conventional meaning that is presupposed. See some examples from the data, below.

62. We should *recapture* those glorious moments and build on them as we work hard to reclaim what we lost to the COVID years >> We have captured some glorious moments before
63. If ever the support of all citizens was required to make something work, it is in the battle to end illegal mining, and *restore* our lands and water bodies to health>> Our lands and water bodies were healthy [before]
64. The Police Service is gradually *regaining* the trust and confidence of the public, under the leadership of its new IGP >> The Police Service lost the trust and confidence of the public [before]
65. Gradually, the police *are bringing* order to the roads and we all now know that the law is no respecter of persons or vehicle types >> There was no order on the roads [before]

(SONA by President Akufo-Addo, Ghana, 30th March, 2022)

The conventional items in the examples above are used to express some facts, in an indirect manner, through their presupposed meanings. The use of these conventional items may cause the audience to decipher these facts for themselves and may end up being convinced and consequently accepting them.

5. Conclusion

Considering the constitutional importance of the President's message to parliament and to all Ghanaians on the reflections, happenings, and true conditions of every sector of the country, the researchers examine how presupposition is employed by the President in the dissemination of his State of the Nation Address on 30th March, 2022. The study unravels the utilization of three types of presupposition and some linguistic forms that trigger them in the president's address: existential presupposition (possessive construction, definite descriptions, and "one" construction), structural presupposition (adverbial clause, relative clause, wh-construction, "even" construction, parentheticals, and counterfactive conditionals), and lexical presupposition (factive verbs/phrase, iteratives, change of state verbs, and conventional items). SONAs are expected to give accounts of the stewardship of the President, who is responsible for the management of every sector of (the Ghanaian) life. Generally, the present study asserts that the use of the presupposition triggers, explored in Section 4, affords the President the avenue to give his message or state his claims as facts,

truths, and actualities of the conditions of the nation. It reveals the implied claims and inexplicit propositions of the stated accounts of the President in his address.

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