

COURSE:

MULTIMODALITY IN LITERARY TEXT

# Concealing and Taking for Granted: Nominalization and Presupposition

Lecture 9

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# Learning Objectives

1. Theory and practice of nominalization
2. Eight effects of nominalization
3. Theory and Practice of presupposition



This lecture is focusing on concealment through two linguistic strategies, which are: **nominalization** and **presupposition**.

**Nominalization** is to replace the verb process into a noun construction. **Presupposition** is the way authors convey meanings without stating them clearly, or present things as taken for granted and stable, while actually the fact is they can be ideological and contestable.

Machin and Mayr, 2012



# **Theory and Practice of Nominalization**

**The New York Times**

***2 Police Officers Killed in Connecticut  
After a Suspicious 911 Call***

Figure 1 (Gold, M., et al., 2022)

# *2 Police Officers Killed in Connecticut After a Suspicious 911 Call*

Figure 1 (Gold, M., et al., 2022)

From passive to active form:

**"The black civilians killed 2 police officers in Connecticut."**

Passive form:

"New regulation of student tuition fee **has been decided and implemented.**"

Active form:

"**We have decided and implemented** the new regulation of student tuition fee."

# *2 Police Officers Killed in Connecticut After a Suspicious 911 Call*

Figure 1 (Gold, M., et al., 2022)

Active form:

**"The black civilians killed 2 police officers in Connecticut."**

Nominalization

**"The killing of 2 policeman after a suspicious 911 call."**

Passive form:

“The global economy **was changed.**”

Nominalization:

“**The changed** global economy.”

The first sentence uses a passive verb to hide who caused the change in the global economy, while the second turns it into a noun, simply like a thing

As CDA learners, it is important for us to evaluate the discourse which is **presented as a thing occurs, rather than a process**. Politicians, present "the changed global economy" to hide the fact that they contribute to this changing process as well. They play a role in the decision making of global economy which affects so many people's life.

The global economy we see today has come about intentionally because certain individuals and groups have pushed for it to serve their interests. The term 'the changed global economy' simplifies what this truly represents - a world economy where big companies expand into new markets to benefit from cheaper manpower costs and resources while leveraging their existing advantages in size and efficiency.

(Machin and Mayr, 2012)

A large, light gray, stylized number '02' is positioned on the left side of the slide. The '0' is a simple oval shape, and the '2' is a bold, blocky numeral. Both digits have a subtle drop shadow effect, giving them a slight 3D appearance.

## **Eight Effects of Nominalization**

1

**Removing the responsibility of the action**

2

**Hiding the affected parties and things**

# 3

**Removing the setting of time**

4

**Setting aside the causality**

5

**Appearing new participants in new constructions**



**Occurring as stable entities**

7

**Accumulating the action through simplification**



## **Becoming a compressed text**

03

**Theory and Practice of  
Presupposition**

Presupposition is about the assumed meanings in a text, what we consider as given or already known

In analyzing texts, it is important to identify these assumed meanings that are presented as something already known, even though it could be debatable as well. Naturally, people use presuppositions to refer to the common knowledge.

Machin and Mayr, 2012

## Jokowi and Political Dynasties **Through Their Children** (voi.id, 2019)

This first article shows the first stage of public assumptions that Jokowi is building a political assumption through his son (Gibran) and son-in-law (Bobby) involvement in 2020 regional elections (pilkada). The phrase "... Through Their Children" is the presupposition. Public knows that it refers to Gibran and Bobby which has been a common knowledge in Indonesia, especially those who are political enthusiast.

What political dynasty? Jokowi's **son-in-law** says bid for Medan mayor is for development (thejakartapost.com, 2019)

The second article shows the second stage which is also related to the first one. The phrase "... son-in-law" is the presupposition that every knows it refers to Bobby Nasution, the one and only son-in-law of Jokowi. Without mentioning name in the headline, people know it is talking about Bobby. He is registering himself in the 2022 regional election to be the mayor of Medan, Sumatera Utara.

Could Jokowi's Family Become Indonesia's Newest Political Dynasty? (thediplomat.com, 2020)

The phrase "... Newest Political Dynasty" indicates that this is not the first time, there was a previous one. It recalls the readers to the previous presidential period where the family members also existed in government positions. This is also a form of presupposition as shown in the third article.

## 'You Can Vote against Me': Jokowi's Son Responds to Political Dynasty Allegation (jakartaglobe.id, 2020)

The fourth article shows the respond of Jokowi's son to the political dynasty issue as the headlined stated "... Political Dynasty Allegation." This also becomes the public's assumption. As the issue spreading in the society, readers can predict how Jokowi's family would respond to it. In their own way, with their own choice of discourse, they would reject the political dynasty's issue. Rather, they would try to convince public that their desire to become regional officials is for the development of the region, not for their own personal interest.

## Jokowi political dynasty: Kaesang hints at political ambitions (thejakartapost.com, 2023)

From the 2020 regional election, we move forward to 2023. There was an issue in early 2023 that Jokowi's youngest son, Kaesang, is planning to also dive into a political career. The word "hints" in this headline becomes a keyword as well as a clue to the readers. It brings free assumptions of public about where and what he will be joining. Furthermore, the "political ambitions" is also a presupposition term which brings back the attempt of Jokowi to build a political dynasty within his family.

## What It means for Indonesia's Democracy That the President's Son Now Leads Another Party (time.com, 2023)

The presuppositions in the sixth headline are shown in two parts. First is "President's Son" which refers to his youngest son, Kaesang and the second is "Leads Another Party" which refers to an Indonesian party named Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI/ Partai Solidaritas Indonesia). In September 2023, it was declared that Kaesang becomes the chairman of PSI. A lot of people are questioning his capacity to be the leader of this party.

The article journalist even introduced Kaesang with the irrelevant identity to his chairman position which implicitly reflects his incapability and how he is well-known in public.

"... Kaesang Pangarep, a 28-year-old prolific YouTuber and the youngest son of Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo..."

Indonesian president brushes off talk of political dynasty (reuters, 2023)

The last headline shows the presupposition through the term “brushes” which I think has the similar interpretation as headline number 4. What makes it different is because now it comes out from the mouth of Jokowi’s himself. After all the issues of political dynasty came out from 2019, he finally made a statement in 2023 at the end of his presidential period. According to the article Jokowi brushes the issue by stating that Indonesian citizens have the rights to choose their future leader. “Just leave it to the people,” he said.

# Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, we explored how language can be used to achieve three main goals. First, it can hide identities, responsibilities, and contexts. Second, it can present disputable ideas as unquestioned truths. Lastly, it can imply meanings without explicitly stating them. Nominalization and presupposition are valuable techniques for authors aiming to persuade without overtly expressing their ideologies. Nominalization is particularly useful when authors want to represent processes and events in a more abstract way, focusing on general concepts rather than specific details of who did what to whom.

In our analysis of the provided examples, we identified which participants and actions are abstracted and which are not. We also observed how authors aim to establish certain concepts as commonly accepted and considered what impact this has. Overall, we've learned how language can be wielded to convey ideas, shape perceptions, and influence readers subtly, even without directly stating those ideas.



**Thank you**



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