
1. Here are two illustrative cases where this assumption is made, and where it indeed plays

necessarily the case. Many

subordinate clause.

2. I will be using the term 'main point' throughout this paper, without attempting to define it. The strategy used here for identifying main point may be taken as definitional: the main point of an utterance U given in answer to a question is that part of the content of U which constitutes the proffered answer to the question.

Beyond this descriptive goal, however, the paper has a theoretical goal: to consider the implications of these facts for the study of presupposition. The phenomenon bears on the issue of presupposition because some of the verbs which have parenthetical uses are standardly classed as presuppositional. But in their parenthetical uses, they

3. I am of course not alone in holding this view. Stalnaker, particularly in his earlier published work on this topic, has “conjectured that one can explain many presupposition constraints in terms of general conversational rules without building anything about presuppositions into the meanings of particular words or constructions” (1974: 212). But Stalnaker has always remained staunchly agnostic on this point, and continues in the same paragraph: “But I make no general claim here. In some cases, one may just have to write presupposition constraints into the dictionary entry for a particular word.” Some others, who advocate Stalnaker’s view of presupposition as constraints on the common ground, have tried to spell out some cases in which these constraints might be conversationally generated; see Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet 2000, p. 354ff., Abusch 2002. J.D. Atlas, on the other hand, has argued consistently for a neo-Gricean account of presupposition, according to which presuppositions are inferences derived on the basis of general Gricean considerations (see, among others, Atlas 1977, 1989, Atlas and Levinson 1981).

1. Main clauses as evidentials: the non-factive case

1.1. Embedded clauses with main point status

Let's begin by elaborating on the claim made in the introduction, that the main point of an utterance may be located in an embedded clause. As noted, I use question/answer sequences as a diagnostic for main point content, assuming that whatever content in the response constitutes an answer to the question is intended as the main point. Given this, consider the examples below. (Note that indications of unacceptability only relate to acceptability as a response to the question.)

- (3) A: Why isn't Louise coming to our meetings these days?
B: a. She's left town.
b. Henry thinks/I think that she's left town.
c. Henry believes/I believe that she's left town.
d. Henry said that she's left town.
e. Henry suggested that she's left town.
f. Henry hinted that she's left town.
g. Henry imagines/I imagine that she's left town.
h. Henry supposes/I suppose that she's left town.
i. Henry heard/I heard that she's left town.
j. Henry is convinced/I'm convinced that she's left town.
k. (?)Henry hopes/I hope that she's left town.
l. ?Henry wants her to have left town.
m. ?Henry dreamt that she's left town.

While the responses in b.-j. *could* be taken as meaning that Louise's absence is due to Henry's, or the speaker's, thoughts, beliefs, and so on, the more natural interpretation here

is that in each case, the answer being proffered – with some degree or other of limited certainty – is that Louise has left town. In other words, the content of the embedded clause, not the main clause, constitutes the main point of the utterance.

Of

4. Here I differ from Urmson 1952, whose view is that some verbs, including *think*, are always parenthetical. However, he does not explicitly consider issues of main vs. non-main point.

5. Rooryk 2001 similarly observes that Urmson's description "comes very close to a definition of evidentiality" (128).

There are some verbs, however, which allow a parenthetical use in their main verb occurrences, but which do not occur in syntactic parentheticals. One set of cases involves recent coinages. Consider, for example:

- (7) a. Jane emailed me that she'll be here next week.
b. *Jane'll be here next week, she emailed (me).

Another set of cases are embedding predicates like *be likely* and *be possible*. As main verb predicates, they are easily used parenthetically, but they do not easily occur as syntactic parentheticals. On the other hand, there are closely related adverbials which seem to abrogate this latter function. Consider:

- (8) Why isn't Louise coming to our meetings these days?
a. It's likely/possible that she's left town.
b. *She's left town, it's likely/possible.
c. She's left town, possibly / most likely⁶.

Parenthetical uses of verbs are also discussed at length by Hooper (1975). Like Urmson, whom she cites, Hooper invokes no

6. In my dialect, *likely* cannot occur alone as an adverbial, but *most likely* can.

I do, though, differ from Hooper in one important respect. Hooper admits as assertive verbs only those which occur both as a main clause predicate and in syntactic parentheticals. Thus, she categorizes *be likely*, *be probable*, and related predicates as nonassertive. She claims further that the syntactic property of non-occurrence in syntactic parentheticals is correlated with a semantic property: these predicates, she claims, “express a much weaker opinion about the truth of the complement proposition [than assertives do]; for this reason the complement proposition is not an assertion.” Now, in some cases, this claim seems straightforwardly incorrect. The speaker of (7)a. for example, which involves a non-alternating predicate not considered by Hooper, indicates fairly robust confidence in the content of the embedded clause. Similarly, the speaker of (9) seems to have at least as much, if not more, confidence in the claim that it is raining as the speaker of (10).

(9) It’s likely that it’s raining.

(10) I suppose that it’s raining.

Yet *be likely* is classed by Hooper as nonassertive, and *suppose* as assertive, simply on the basis of the possibility of using the predicate in a syntactic parenthetical.

However, the real difficulty with the proposed semantic criterion is in Hooper’s use of the notion of assertion. As I will discuss further below, it is not clear that an embedded clause is *ever* asserted, even when the embedding verb is used parenthetically. The function of the parenthetical verb is very often precisely to indicate the weakness of the speaker’s commitment to the truth of the complement, while assertion generally involves an absolute commitment to the truth of what is asserted. But this does not prevent the content of the embedded clause from constituting the main point of the utterance. And indeed, as we have noted, Hooper elsewhere takes main point status of the embedded clause as the diagnostic for an assertive verb. If we set aside the problematic notion of assertion, and focus instead on the question of what part of the sentence carries main point content, it seems clear that

even verbs which do not occur in syntactic parentheticals can have a parenthetical use in embedding constructions.

So, while I adopt the term *assertive* from Hooper, I use it in a somewhat different way: in my terms, a predicate is classified as assertive just in case it allows for a semantically parenthetical use.

The distribution of main point and non-main point material in an utterance involving an assertive predicate can be more complex than the discussion so far indicates. As prelude to some more complicated examples, note that a felicitous response to a question may, instead of proffering a positive answer, exclude certain answers that may have been under consideration. For example:

(11) A: Why isn't Louise coming to our meetings these days?

B: Well, she hasn't left town. [I ran into her in the supermarket yesterday.]

Now observe that we can use forms with an assertive verb to convey an exclusionary answer of this sort:

(12) Why isn't Louise coming to our meetings these days?

- a. Henry, the idiot, thinks that she's left town.
- b. Henry, entirely wrongly, is convinced that she's left town.
- c. Henry, falsely, said that she's left town.

All of these are ways of conveying both that Louise has *not* left town (and thus, that this is not the reason for her non-appearances); and that Henry mistakenly believes that this is the explanation. In these examples, it *is* part of what the speaker conveys that Henry thinks, or is convinced, or said, a particular thing. However, this thinking or saying is not the main point of the utterances. The main point is carried by the embedded clause; but of course, the

main point is not to assert this content, but to deny its truth. The verb *doubt* can perform the same function.⁷ Consider example (13) as response to the question in (12):

a

n

7. *Doubt* is one of the verbs which Hooper classifies as nonassertive, on the grounds that (a) it does not occur in syntactic parentheticals and (b) its complement is not asserted. But *doubt* undoubtedly serves in a parenthetical function to express the speaker's attitude toward the embedded content. And as we will see below, this is the typical role for a parenthetical main verb.

Response (a) can be paraphrased as follows:

- (15) “The answer to your question might be that Louise has left town. The source of the claim that Louise has left town is Henry; but Henry is not fully committed to its truth.”

Similarly, we might paraphrase response (b) as:

- (16) “The answer to your question is probably that Louise has left town. I’m asserting this on the basis of hearsay evidence, so the claim is as reliable as my sources.”

The oddity of responses k.-m. in example (3) above is presumably due to the fact that Henry’s hopes, desires and dreams do not provide very good evidence as to what is the case, and so are not evidence on which answers to a factual question should be based. (On the other hand, if Henry has a reputation as a seer, response m. is fine!)

The previous two examples show parenthetical verbs carrying information about the reliability of an embedded claim. These verbs can also serve some of the other functions listed by Rooryck. As noted above, predicates such as *be (un)likely* and *be probable* provide information about the probability of the embedded content. And in sentences like (17), the main verb indicates the speaker’s emotional orientation toward the embedded content:

- (17) I regret that your request has been denied.

We will return to sentences of this last sort later.

As we noted above, many of the embedding verbs which have a semantically parenthetical use also occur in syntactic parenthetical constructions. And, again according to Rooryck, syntactic parentheticals express evidential meanings (127). As pairs such as

9.In

10. Another possibility is that parentheticals are fixed expressions which disallow modification in just the way that other idioms do. Either way, the fact that in canonical embedding structures, modification is possible even when the verbs are used parenthetically suggests that the verbs are functioning just as ordinary embedding verbs.

- (25) a. I bet / Tom bets (that) they'll reinstate the draft.
b. They'll reinstate the draft, I bet / ??Tom bets.

On this basis, then, I assume in what follows that the difference between a parenthetical and a nonparenthetical use of an embedding verb is a difference

11. We will see below (p.28) that parenthetical verbs may serve other discourse functions too.

answer. She might therefore conclude (via some inference process) that it is the *content* of Henry's saying that the speaker is proffering as answer. She might further conclude, from the fact that the speaker has not simply asserted that Louise left town, that the speaker herself does not have adequate evidence to make this assertion. The speaker has, though, asserted that *Henry* made this assertion. Therefore, the speaker must intend to present Henry's saying as the source of the proffered answer that Louise has left town.

I don't wish to commit to this sort of account being correct, only to note that it is a possible explanation. It is very likely that this strategy for expressing attitudes towards some content has become conventionalized in the language, so a hearer does not really need to work out the speaker's intention each time she encounters this kind of usage. But this sort of pragmatic account might explain how the usage originates.¹²

Note that this account commits one to saying that the proposition expressed by the sentence as a whole is asserted. This is consistent with facts about agreement and disagreement. Consider two different ways a hearer might respond to B's utterance below:

(27) A: Why isn't Louise coming to our meetings these days?

B: Henry thinks that she's left town.

C: a. But she hasn't. I saw her yesterday in the supermarket.

b. No he doesn't. He told me her saw her yesterday in the supermarket.

In utterance (a), C is responding directly to the main point of B's utterance. But in the denial in (b), C is responding to the claim about what Henry thinks. From the fact that the claim can

12. Urmson 1952 suggests a very different view, at least for some of the verbs here labeled assertive. He proposes that the parenthetical use of some verbs is their *primary* use, with their (occasional) use as "psychological descriptions" being derivative on the parenthetical use. It would be interesting to explore the plausibility of this proposal further, but I shall not do so here.

be denied, it is clear that it has been made. So, even though B's main point is that Louise (might have) left town, her utterance commits her to the proposition that Henry thinks this. This is the kind of commitment which accompanies assertion. Thus, what is asserted is distinct from the main point content. I would want to maintain this distinction even if the account sketched above were abandoned.¹³

My main interest in the phenomenon I have presented lies in its relation to presuppositionality. To see this relation, we must turn to the cases of semi-factive and factive predicates, which we do in sections 2 and 3. However, our discussion so far does have a point of intersection with discussions of presupposition. For our observations seem to undermine an explanation of the presuppositionality of *know* (and other factives) offered by Stalnaker 1974 and echoed by, among others, Abbott 2000.

Stalnaker suggests that a speaker who says “*x* knows that *P*”:

would be saying in one breath something that could be challenged in two different ways. He would be leaving unclear whether his **main point** [my emphasis – ms.] was to make a claim about the truth of *P*, or to make a claim about the epistemic situation of *x* ... Thus, given what “*x* knows that *P*” means, and given that people normally want to communicate in an orderly way ... it would be unreasonable to assert that *x* knows that *P* in such a context.

Stalnaker, presumably, has supposed that *know* sentences are subject to this ambiguity of main point because they entail the truth of their embedded clause. However, our data show that *non-factives* show this ambiguity. Stalnaker's argument would thus lead us to expect that non-factive embedding verbs should require, for their felicitous use, that either their main

13. In making the distinction, I differ from Hooper 1975, and also, I think, from Abbott 2000.

clause content or their subordinate clause content should be presupposed in his sense, i.e. taken to be common ground information. But this is clearly not the case.

There is another theoretical proposal which seems to be impacted by these data. Abbott 2000 proposes that presuppositions (of an utterance) are non-main point propositions conveyed by the utterance. But in our examples, although the main clause content is not main point, we would not want to describe it as presupposed. There may, however, be a difference between these cases and the ones which she considers, a point we will return to below.

2. Semi-factives, evidentiality and presuppositionality

One of the central discoveries of Hooper 1975 is that semi-factives (a class originally identified by Karttunen 1971) are assertives. That is, they have parenthetical uses in which their complements constitute the main point of the utterance. The examples in (28), showing semi-factives in syntactic parentheticals, are Hooper's; the examples in (29) are mine.

- (28) a. There are two kinds of factive predicates, I found out.
b. She was a compulsive liar, he soon realized.
c. It was difficult to make ends meet, they discovered.
- (29) Why isn't Louise coming to our meetings these days?
a. Henry discovered that she's left town.
b. Henry realized that she's left town.
c. Henry figured out that she's left town.
d. Henry learned that she's left town.

As Hooper notes, the parenthetical use of semi-factives constitutes a problem for the assumption that these predicates are presuppositional, for what is presupposed cannot also be asserted. Hooper, writing in 1975, takes presupposition to be simply whatever the speaker

takes for granted. However, these instances of semi-factives are non-presuppositional also in the sense in which this notion is currently understood by a majority of researchers: as whatever is treated by the speaker as being part of the conversational common ground.¹⁴ It is intuitively clear that in these examples, the proposition that Louise has left town is being presented as new and main point information.

It is well known that in some cases, a speaker can exploit presuppositionality in order to convey some information without directly asserting it. In these cases, a presupposition might become the main point of an utterance. Consider, for instance, the following well-worn example:

- (30) A: The new guy is very attractive.
B: Yes, and his wife is lovely too.

The standard story about this example goes as follows: B's utterance presupposes (and does not assert) that the new guy has a wife. By producing this presupposing utterance, B is acting as if she believes that proposition to be part of the common ground. The pretense is intentionally transparent, and has the result that A comes to believe that the new guy has a wife. And under easily imaginable circumstances, B might well intend this as the main point of her utterance.

14. There are in fact a number of varieties of this "common ground" view of presupposition: see Simons 2003 for discussion. And there are a number of researchers who do not subscribe to any version of the common ground view: see for example Abbott 2000, Simons 2004. However, I think that everyone accepts that, whatever the correct analysis of presupposition might be, it is descriptively correct to say that the presuppositions of an utterance are in some sense backgrounded, and thus contrasted with what is foregrounded or asserted.

it is also the case that in these examples, if *discover* is read non-presuppositionally, then it is also read non-factively. That is, on one way of taking the sentence the speaker seems to take for granted that Louise is in NY; this reading is presuppositional *and* factive. On the other way of taking the sentence, the speaker does not treat it as common knowledge that Louise is in NY; but on this reading, there is no commitment whatsoever on the part of the speaker that Louise is in NY.

But the examples in (28)-(29) are different. Here, the speaker *is* committed to the truth of the complement proposition; but, as we have already observed, none of the other characteristics of presuppositionality are preserved. In particular:

- (a) The speaker does not take the complement proposition to be common ground.
- (b) There is no pretense that the speaker takes the complement proposition to be common ground.
- (c) It is not necessary for a hearer to accept the complement proposition *prior* to accepting or rejecting the main point proposition: this precisely *is* the main point proposition.¹⁶

So, going by the simplest intuitions concerning what it is for a proposition to be presupposed, these appear to be non-presuppositional uses of semi-factives which are *not* coupled with an elimination of the factive implication.

16. In making this point, I'm addressing the proposal in Stalnaker (2002) as to how to think about informative presuppositions: cases where a piece of new information is introduced via a presuppositional expression. Stalnaker proposes that presuppositions are required to become common ground at some point, possibly after the utterance has been made, but before "it has been accepted or rejected." (fn.14). But in our cases, as the embedded clause has main point status, acceptance or rejection of the utterance would seem to be constituted by acceptance or rejection of the embedded clause content.

In the case of parenthetical uses of nonfactive assertive verbs, the speaker does not necessarily take on any commitment to the truth of the complement proposition if the assertive predicate is not first person, or is not present tense:¹⁷

(34) Henry believes that Louise left town (but he's wrong).

(35) I once believed that some wars are just (but I was wrong).

In the case of semi-factive assertives, however, the speaker is committed to the truth of the complement, even if she names a third party as the source of the information conveyed. This follows straightforwardly from the lexical meaning of the verbs. An agent can discover p only if p is true. Now, given that a speaker should assert only that for which she has adequate evidence, it follows that a speaker should assert that x discovered p only if she is certain that p is true. For only under these circumstances can she be certain that x discovered it.

Here is a final illustration of the fact that even in their parenthetical uses, semi-factives maintain their factive implication. Compare examples (36)a-b. with examples (12)a-b., repeated from above.

(12) Why isn't Louise coming to our meetings these days?

a. Henry, the idiot, thinks that she's left town.

b. Henry, entirely wrongly, is convinced that she's left town.

(36) a. Henry, the idiot, discovered that Louise has left town.

b. #Henry, entirely incorrectly, realized that Louise has left town.

17. Cf. Urmson (1952: 492): "What is said to be supposed, regretted, believed etc., by others, or by oneself in the past, is not in general implied to be true or reasonable by the speaker (there are exceptions to this, in each case with a special reason, *know* being an obvious example)."

As we noted, the utterances in (12) can be used to convey simultaneously that Henry believes that Louise has left town, and that this is not true. But this is not possible with the examples in (36). Sentence (36)a. says that Henry is an idiot, but also says that he indeed discovered that Louise has left town. (36)b. is simply anomalous. The bottom line is that the use of the semi-factive assertive indeed does commit the speaker to the truth of the complement clause.

Thus, we observe that in the case of semi-factives, presuppositionality and factivity can come apart. So, for those of us interested in finding the source of presuppositionality in particular cases, it seems that we cannot take presuppositionality to be *simply* a consequence of factivity.sted in

But a little further investigation shows otherwise. Let's begin by focusing on *know*; we will return shortly to other factives.

First, consider a minor variant on (37)a.:

- (38) A: Why isn't Louise coming to our meetings these days?
B: I know from Henry that she's left town.

This is much better. Moreover, the evidential function of the embedding clause is clear. It identifies Henry as the source of the information, while indicating (with *know*) a strong degree of commitment to the truth of the embedded claim.

The contrast between (37)a. and (38) suggests that bare *know* cannot have a purely evidential reading. But further examples undermine this idea too. The following, for instance, seems very natural. Suppose that we are in a restaurant, and you notice that I keep staring at a diner at another table. Finally I say:

- (39) I KNOW I've run into that guy somewhere, but I can't for the life of me think where it was.

(The capitalization of *know* is to indicate that, for me at least, this would be most natural with heavy stress on this verb.) In the context, an utterance of (39) might well be more natural than utterance of the same sentence without *I know*. However, *I know* doesn't seem to add to the communicated content. Rather, by prefacing the (main point) claim with *I KNOW...*, the speaker makes explicit her strong commitment to the truth of that claim. The emphatic stress may serve to bring out the implicit contrast with weaker degrees of commitment.¹⁸

18. Urmson, although he gives no examples with *know*, certainly indicates that he thinks that *know* does have a parenthetical reading. In fact, this is one of the cases where he thinks the parenthetical use is primary.

Suppose that speaker B had said *She's left town*. Then she would have asserted that Louise left town; and having asserted it without any qualification, would be strongly committed to the truth of that assertion.

Now, what is the effect of evidential *know*? Presumably, to indicate strong commitment to the truth of the embedded proposition. But this effect is redundant in the case at hand. Therefore, an interpreter, looking for a non-redundant interpretation, will take the main clause content (i.e. the knowledge claim) as the main point.²⁰

In the discussion so far, I have been assuming “neutral” intonation for B’s utterance in (41). (In any case, the same intonation that would be appropriate if *know* were replaced by, say, *think*.) The utterance could be rendered more natural by a change in intonation. For example, suppose we have intonation indicating a tentative utterance (for me, this would involve a rise-fall on *town*), perhaps accompanied by an initial *well*. Then we have a case similar to (40) above. The overall effect of the utterance could be glossed as:

“Louise has left town; I know this is true, but I’m not certain if it is the answer to your question.”

Thus far we have argued that the difficulty of obtaining a main point reading for a clause embedded under *know* with a first person subject is that the parenthetical (evidential) reading of *know* would be redundant. Hence, a non-parenthetical reading is preferred. What about the case of a third person subject, as in (42)a.? Here, we have to consider the contrast with the successful (42)b.

20. This still leaves the acceptability of an evidential reading of (39) a little puzzling. The heavy stress on *know* seems to play an important role, so we might consider that the stress is what marks it as evidential. This suggests that (41) could be improved by heavy stress on *know*, but I don’t have a clear sense of the effect of the change.

- (42) Why isn't Louise coming to our meetings these days?
- a. ??Henry knows that she's left town.
 - b.

We have also seen, though, that the availability of parenthetical (evidential) readings for *know* is limited by its particular evidential function, which in turn is a consequence of its particular lexical meaning. Hooper observes that factives and semi-factives have meanings of different sorts: factives “express a subjective attitude about the complement proposition” while semifactives “describe processes of knowing or coming to know” or, in the case of *reveal*, for example, processes of “letting someone else ‘come to know’” (117). It’s clear that the latter sort of meaning will be more useful in conveying evidential information. Hooper

about the subject's epistemic relation to the embedded proposition for it to have a purely evidential function. *It's odd that...*, on the other hand, just doesn't have any evidential content at all.

So, my argument is that the factivity of these verbs is not what excludes a parenthetical reading. Rather, we are looking at an environment in which a parenthetical reading would have to be evidential; but the lexical content of the verbs rules out an evidential reading, at least in the context under consideration.

It is not hard, however, to find other kinds of parenthetical readings for these verbs.

- (45) Yikes! I just remembered/realized that I didn't turn off the stove!
- (46) Sorry, we're going to have to change our plans for dinner tonight.
- a. Henry forgot that he has an evening appointment.
 - b. Henry just realized/remembered that he has an evening appointment.

In these cases, the main verb doesn't have an evidential function, but does seem to have some kind of utterance modifier or discourse coherence function. For example, (45) seems to have an effect along these lines:

"I didn't turn off the stove; and the reason I'm saying this out of the blue is that I just remembered/realized it."

Similarly, the effect of (46)a. might be glossed as follows:

"We can't come to dinner because Henry has an evening appointment; and the reason I didn't tell you until now is that Henry forgot about it."²¹

21. Cf:

- (i) I forget – is Louise a vegetarian?
- (ii) Is Louise a vegetarian? – I forget.

Here, *I forget* seems glossable as follows: "I know you expect me to know the answer to this question; I'm asking because I have forgotten." Note the simple present form of *forget*,

This collection of examples suggests that a parenthetical interpretation for a main clause predicate is possible whenever that predicate can be interpreted as doing something other than – or perhaps, in addition to – conveying what we might call – or perhaps, i

indicating grammaticalization. (See Anderson 1986.)

3.3. Embedded announcements

In addition to the sorts of cases considered so far, there is another familiar case where the complement of a factive verb has main point status. This is the case of embedded announcements, as in (48)-(51):

- (48) We regret that children cannot accompany their parents to commencement exercises. (Karttunen 1974: ex.26a.)
- (49) We regret to inform you that your insurance policy is hereby cancelled.
- (50) I'm afraid that your insurance policy has been cancelled.
- (51) We are pleased to announce that your visa has been renewed.

Such cases have been the subject of a fair amount of discussion, because, like the other cases of parenthetical factives discussed here, they seem to challenge the claim that factive verbs are conventionally presuppositional in the sense of requiring their complement to be (treated as) common ground. Responses to this challenge generally observe that these are polite forms, and propose that they involve some kind of pretense, on the part of the speaker, that the main point is other than it actually is. Even Abbott, despite her alternative take on the nature of presuppositionality, advocates a treatment along these lines. She claims that in examples like (49), “the form of utterance...presents the regret as what is being asserted,”²² although real world knowledge tells us that “the fact that an insurance policy is cancelled is much more important than the fact, or pretense, that the insurers are unhappy about the cancellation” (1430). So, the suggestion goes, real world knowledge allows the interpreter to identify a main point which is ‘concealed’ by the grammatical form.

22. Note here Abbott’s conflation of what is asserted with what is main point. I agree with her that the regret is what is asserted. But I deny that this has anything to do with identification of the main point content.

However, we have by now seen a host of examples of sentences which easily allow for a main point interpretation of their embedded clause, and without any sense that some pretense – even a transparent one – is involved. It would seem most natural to consider embedded announcements as another such case, and to deny that the complement clauses are in any sense presupposed. This suggestion is, I think, reinforced by the observation that the main verbs in (48)-(51) appear to serve the same function as the parentheticals and adverbials in the following, cases which Rooryck calls *surprisals*.

(52) Regrettably, children cannot accompany their parents...

(53) Your insurance policy has been cancelled, I'm afraid.

(54) Your visa has been renewed, we are pleased to inform you.

Indeed Urmson, unfettered by current assumptions concerning factivity and presuppositionality, offers *regret* as a central example of a parenthetical verb. It is used, Urmson says, to indicate the emotional orientation of the speaker towards the content of the embedded clause, whose content constitutes the main point of the utterance.

In light of the data presented here, then, it is rather clear that embedded announcements are not an anomaly. They are rather one of many cases where a predicate which is in some cases presuppositional turns out not to be in a particular discourse environment.

4. General conclusions for the study of presupposition

But this point also extends to the many other cases we have seen where the complement of a supposedly presuppositional predicate constitutes the main point of an utterance. To reiterate the point made above with respect to parenthetical uses of semifactives: When factives are used parenthetically, as in for example, (38)-(40) and (45)-(46), the speaker is in no sense treating the complement as “given”: it is not being treated as if it were common ground, and there is no pretense that it is being so treated. But this content is also not

presuppositional in the sense of Abbott 2000: it *is* main point content. From a descriptive point of view, the most natural thing to say is that when the main clause predicate is used parenthetically, the complement clause is not presupposed.

Many researchers consider the presuppositionality of verbs such as *know*, *realize* and *forget* to be a lexical property which imposes strict definedness conditions on utterances which contain them. According to satisfaction theories of presupposition (e.g. Heim 1983, 1992), the presuppositionality of a (semi)factive consists in a formal requirement that the content of its complement be entailed by the context to which the asserted proposition is added. According to the presupposition-as-anaphora theory of Van der Sandt (1992), presuppositionality consists in a requirement that the content of the complement have an anaphoric antecedent in the Discourse Representation Structure to which it is added. In both theories, the requirements may be fulfilled via accommodation, a process whereby the necessary updates are made (in some sense) prior to processing of the presupposing sentence. The observations made here are compatible with the claim that this formal requirement is in force, but only if we disconnect the formal requirements from intuitions of backgrounding, being taken for granted, and so on. And this would seem, in turn, to undermine the appeal of such theories.

But indeed the data seem problematic for any view of presupposition as a lexical or conventional property of particular items, for they suggest (as do many other kinds of data) that many cases of presupposition have a “now-you-see-it-now-you-don’t” character. These data in particular suggest that the presuppositionality of an embedding verb is crucially tied to its function in the discourse. And this kind of variability is just what we expect of phenomena which are a consequence of conversational processes and constraints.

The alternative open to advocates of the presupposition-as-lexical-requirement view is to take verbs in their parenthetical functions to be lexically distinct from the homophonous verbs in their fully “lexical” functions: that is, to say that parenthetical *know* is a distinct lexical item from non-parenthetical *know*. We considered evidence for and against this

position earlier, when we examined the question of whether sentence-initial occurrences of parenthetical verbs should be treated as ordinary embedding predicates. (See p.11ff. for discussion.) The principal argument for that position is the lexical bleaching observed in parenthetical uses of verbs. But as we observed above, the fact that adverbial modification of assertive verbs is possible (as in (55), repeated from above) suggests that ordinary lexical content is preserved to some degree.

(55) Henry firmly believes that Louise has left town.

Moreover, as we've now seen, the lexical content of verbs plays a crucial role in the sort of parenthetical use available: *regret* and *realize*, for example, have different parenthetical uses because their lexical contents differ. So, there is obviously a connection between nonparenthetical *regret* and its parenthetical cousin.

And in fact, all kinds of words allow for more or less "literal" applications. Here are two random examples. First, consider the verb *run* in (56)-(57):

(56) I'm going to run out and get some milk.

(57) Would you run upstairs and get me a blanket?

In both cases, *run* seems to be semantically bleached, meaning something very close to *go*, but perhaps with an added sense of urgency or speed. Second, consider the word *dog*. We would normally assume that to be a dog is to be animate. But of course I can also call a stuffed toy a dog, without incurring any commitment that it is animate. These are merely illustrations of the fact that lexical meaning is extremely flexible, and thus it seems foolhardy to posit new lexical entries for every new use of an item that we encounter.

A final consideration against the idea that parenthetical uses of verbs involve distinct lexical items is that the parenthetical use of predicates is productive; even recent coinages can be so used. Consider:

(58) A: When d'you expect to see Jane next?

B: She emailed / faxed / text-messaged me that she'll be here next week.²³

A

23. As noted above, these *don't* occur in syntactic parentheticals.

in which it is clear that her main point is to inform the hearer about the event while simultaneously expressing her emotional orientation towards it, then the hearer has no reason to assume that she is presupposing the occurrence of the event.

Certainly, some sen

5.1. Nonfactive embedding verbs in parenthetical use

Example 1 (SBC)

MILES: This infectious disease woman, +++

MILES: at San Francisco General,

PETE: Mhm,

MILES: she **said** that, ... this doesn't seem like it can be true, but she **said** that, ... ninety per cent of gay

5.3. Parenthetical use of *know*

These deserve brief comment. In the Corpus of Spoken Professional American English I found frequent occurrences of what I take to be evidential uses of *know*, such as I discussed on p.23 above. When I originally thought about these cases, I was a little uncertain about the reliability of my intuition that such uses are possible. But it is clear from the corpus that they are. Note also that although the examples below are all taken from a transcript of one meeting, each is from a different speaker.

Example 1 (SPAЕ)

And my understanding was that that's why we were going to have the supplementary materials to show what the implications for instruction might be. I think most of

gives to support the University at Chapel Hill, we generate another three to four dollars for the State.

Example 4 (SPAE)

It's been my experience that quite often, we as -- we who are in the classroom as a teacher, we have our little pet curriculums, things that we like to do, little topics of whatever it happens to be. I **know** that in our state, in the state of Colorado, one of the things that we are working on right now is meeting standards and benchmarks for curricula.

Example 5 (SPAE)

MILLER: How do we motivate eighth grade students?

BERRY: Well, if I had that answer, I would be on the road. (Laughter)

BERRY: You know, I really don't have a simple answer for that one.

I **know** that there have been some suggestions from NCTM to consider perhaps a presidential scholar, you know, kids who do well.

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