

The Myth of Factive Verbs

Allan Hazlett

1. What ‘factive verbs’ are

It is often said that some linguistic expressions are ‘factive’, and it is not always made explicit what is meant by this. An orthodoxy among philosophers is the thesis that certain two-place predicates that denote relations between persons and propositions – ‘knows’, ‘learns’, ‘remembers’, and ‘realizes’, for example – are *factive* in this sense: that an utterance of ‘S knows p’ is true only if p, that an utterance of ‘S learned p’ is true only if p, and so on.¹ This is the sense that philosophers attach to the thesis that a verb is factive. But it is false that these expressions are factive, in this sense.² It is my business here to convince you that this is so, to explain why it appears plausible that these expressions are factive, and to propose an alternative account of the implication from (for example) ‘S knows p’ to the truth of p.

The view that these expressions are factive is a myth, but by calling it that I don’t mean to disparage it. Myths can be useful, and often serve to emphasize or point out something important. The myth of factive verbs is one of these, but the time has come to give up the myth. I think that I can say why the myth of factive verbs was useful, and I think I can explain, without mythology, the linguistic phenomena that the myth was useful in capturing.

The thesis that ‘knows’ and its kin are factive is, to put it misleadingly, a contingent claim about the meanings of certain words in English. This is misleading because, if ‘knows’ denotes the knowledge relation, this claim is true iff all known propositions are true. And *that* is not a contingent claim about the meaning of a certain word in English; *that* is a necessary truth about knowledge, if it is a truth at all.³ One possibility that this paper leaves open, however, is the possibility that ‘knows’ does *not* denote the knowledge relation. I think this might be an attractive position for those who insist that

¹ I will always use ‘learns’ in the past tense, because ‘I learn that p’ and ‘She learns that p’ are relatively uncommon.

² Some use ‘factive’ to cover expressions whose use involves the presupposition of the truth of some proposition. See §4.

³ Cf. Vendler, Z., *Linguistics and Philosophy* (Cornell, 1967), pp. 22-3

knowledge is factive – meaning that the knowledge relation can only obtain between persons and true propositions. If I am right, ‘knows’ doesn’t denote any relation like *that*. On the other hand, if ‘knows’ does denote the knowledge relation, then ‘knows’ is factive iff knowledge is. If so, then the claim that knowledge is factive is akin, epistemologically, to the claim that all bachelors are unmarried. Mutatis mutandis for other supposedly factive verbs, and the relations they denote.

2. Is the orthodox view obviously true?

Assuming ‘knows’ denotes the knowledge relation, we can investigate whether the orthodox view is true by asking whether all known propositions are true. If the orthodox view is true, then we should expect the claim that all known propositions are true to be obvious to anyone who knows the meaning of ‘knows’. But *the claim that all known propositions are true is not obvious to most people!* If you ask a non-philosopher whether something false can be known, she will tell you (if she tells you anything) that something false indeed *can* be known. The lack of intuitive support for the orthodox view is even greater when it comes to claims such as *nothing false can be remembered* and *nothing false can be learned*. Ordinary people not only don’t find these claims obvious, they find these claims to be *patently false*. If ‘knows’, ‘remembers’, and ‘learns’ were factive, this would not be so.

What about the fact that *all known propositions are true* is obvious to most philosophers? Presumably, if we are to take *that* as a reason to think that all known propositions are true, it will be because we think that philosophers have some argument that the non-philosophers lack. If philosophical opinion counts more than ordinary opinion, it counts more *because* we think philosophers might have discovered some reasons that non-philosophers aren’t aware of. So it is never a good argument in favor of a view *just* to point out that most philosophers believe it, at least if you have time to explain *why* most philosophers believe it. In §3 I’ll consider the best arguments I could think up in favor of the orthodox view; they’re all unsound.

The orthodox view that there are factive verbs not only fails to jive with ordinary people’s intuitions, it fails to jive – much more importantly – with ordinary people’s use

of the relevant words. The following are unexceptional, and do not strike ordinary people as improper:

- (1) Everyone knew that stress caused ulcers, before two Australian doctors in the early 80s proved that ulcers are actually caused by bacterial infection.⁴
- (2) In school we learned that World War I was a war to “make the world safe for democracy,” when it was really a war to make the world safe for the Western imperial powers.⁵
- (3) I had trouble breathing, sharp pains in my side, several broken ribs and a partially collapsed lung, and I was in the middle of nowhere without any real rescue assets – it was then that I realized I was going to die out there.⁶

Ordinary language talk of false memories is, I assume, familiar enough. Since these uses of ‘knows’, ‘learns’, ‘remembers’, and ‘realizes’ are unexceptional, and do not strike ordinary people as deviant in any way, I contend that the best working hypothesis is that these utterances are (or could be) *true*. The orthodox view is *not* obviously true, and therefore we shall need arguments in favor of it, if we are to reasonably adopt it.

Objection: The uses of factive verbs you appeal to are cases of loose talk.

Reply 1: On some views of loose talk, ‘loose’ utterances are literally true (but not ‘strictly’ true, not as accurate as they could be, etc.); opponents of these views of loose talk may skip ahead to Reply 2. For reasons of charity I prefer views of loose talk on which ‘loose’ utterances such as ‘It’s two-thirty’ when it is, exactly, 2:29, are true. To say that utterances of (1) – (3) are loose talk, on this view of loose talk, is to say that they are true, and hence to say that ‘knows’ and its kin are not factive.

Reply 2: A paradigm case of loose talk is an utterance of ‘It’s two-thirty’ when it is, exactly, 2:29. The ‘loose’ utterance is ‘close’ to being true, it ‘approximates’ the truth, etc. The uses of ‘knows’, ‘learns’, ‘remembers’, and ‘realizes’ in the examples above are nothing like that. I don’t know how to make sense of the idea of ‘loose talk’ except when some *quantity* is involved – and the speaker has said something about this quantity that is not *exactly* right, but it is *close* to being right, in the sense that the

⁴ Adapted from Achenbach, J., “Cat Carrier: Your cat could make you crazy,” *National Geographic* 208 (2005). Thanks to Keith DeRose.

⁵ Adapted from Zinn, H., “America’s Blinders,” *The Progressive* (April, 2006).

⁶ Adapted from a quotation in Schloeffel, E., “Airman ‘keeps faith’ during hard times,” Moody Air Force Base Press Release (February 10, 2006), available at www.moody.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123016634.

quantity mentioned by the speaker is *close* to some real quantity. And the cases we are considering just aren't like that in any imaginable way.

Objection: The uses of factive verbs you appeal to are cases in which said verbs are used with a different sense than they are often used. 'Knows' and other factive verbs are semantically ambiguous, in some contexts they take a factive sense; in others they take a non-factive sense.

Reply: We should not posit ambiguity unless we have to. *If* we have some independent reason to say that 'knows', 'learns', 'remembers', and 'realizes' are factive, *then* it may be legitimate to posit ambiguity to explain utterances of (1) – (3). But unless we do have such an independent reason, there is absolutely no reason to do that. What is at stake, here, is the possibility of a certain kind of semantics for 'knows' – a semantics on which 'knows' is univocal. I hold out hope that such a semantics can be had; §4 undertakes the project of explaining some of our various uses of 'knows' within this framework.

Objection: The uses of factive verbs you appeal to are cases in which those verbs are used ironically, metaphorically, or in some other felicitous flout of Grice's maxim of Quality.⁷

Reply: Again, we should posit systematic flouting of Quality only as a last resort. Unless we have independent reason to suppose that nothing false can be known, learned, remembered, or realized, it is illegitimate to interpret speakers as purposely employing a flout of Quality. In the next section I consider four such independent reasons, and find them all inadequate.

3. Four bad reasons to adopt the orthodox view

According to Zeno Vendler, philosophers, and not linguists, first claimed that that 'knows' and its kin are factive.⁸ But such a view is orthodox among linguists as well – although some say that the use of (some) 'factive' expressions involves a presupposition (rather than an entailment) of the truth of some proposition. I say the orthodox view is

⁷ As proposed by Holton, *op. cit.*

⁸ Vendler, *op. cit.* p. 29

false (see §4 for some remarks on presupposition) – so why have so many people been taken in? Here are four unsound arguments:

Argument 1: Syntax. The supposedly factive verbs are members of a class of expressions with certain syntactic features in common, which we'll call the *syntactically factive* expressions. First, syntactically factive expressions can always be followed by 'the fact that ...', while others cannot. Compare:

(4) I remember the fact that I opened the door.

(5) * I believe the fact that I opened the door.

Second, syntactically factive expressions are always able to be followed by gerunds, whereas others are not. Compare:

(6) I remember having opened the door.

(7) * I believe having opened the door.

Third, syntactically factive expressions, by contrast with others, cannot be followed by infinitives. Compare:

(8) * I realize Martin to have opened the door.

(9) I believe Martin to have opened the door.

The class of syntactically factive expressions are also factive, in the sense defined at the outset (call this being *semantically factive*).⁹

Reply 1: That a certain class of expressions has certain syntactic features in common is not a good reason to conclude that they have any *particular* semantic feature in common. (Perhaps it is a good reason to conclude that they will have some semantic features in common.) So even if it were true that all the verbs on our list are syntactically akin to one another, this would not provide a reason to conclude that they are factive, in the sense defined at the outset.

Reply 2: It is not true that all the verbs on our list are syntactically akin to one another – they are not all syntactically factive. As you may have noticed, we had to be careful in selecting verbs from our list to construct these examples, because the verbs on our list do not all meet all three criteria. Consider:

(10) * I know the fact that I opened the door.

⁹ See Kiparsky and Kiparsky, "Fact," in Steinberg and Jakobovits (eds.), *Semantics: An interdisciplinary reader* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 345-69

- (11) * I learned the fact that I opened the door.
- (12) * I realize the fact that I opened the door.
- (13) * I know having opened the door.
- (14) * I learned having opened the door.
- (15) * I realized having opened the door.
- (16) I know Martin to have opened the door.
- (17) I remember Martin to have opened the door.

In other words, as Kiparsky and Kiparsky note, ‘knows’ and others are “syntactically non-factive.” They insist, though, that they are semantically factive in spite of this.¹⁰ But since we are looking for *reasons* to suppose that these expressions are (semantically) factive, this concession is in line with my contention: that syntax gives us no reason to say that ‘knows’ and others are factive.

Argument 2: The appearance of contradiction. Someone who says ‘I know p, but not-p’ contradicts herself. Therefore, knowledge is factive. *Mutatis mutandis* for learning, remembering, realizing.

Reply: ‘I know p, but not-p’ is not contradictory, but an utterance of it is Moore paradoxical – to know that p is to believe that p, and ‘I believe p, but not-p’ is paradigmatically Moore paradoxical. It is possible to mistakenly take a sentence, the utterance of which would be Moore paradoxical, for a contradiction. An utterance of ‘I know p, but not-p’ is always improper, but the sentence is not a contradiction. (Notice that, just as ‘I believed p, but not-p’ is not Moore paradoxical, neither is ‘I knew p, but not-p’, as in the case of the rescued airman above.)

It may be objected that ‘She knows p, but not-p’ also appears to be a contradiction. In §4 I outline what I think are some correct proposals concerning the pragmatics of the use of ‘knows’ – and there I maintain that an utterance of ‘S knows p’ typically implies that p is true. I think this goes some way towards explaining why ‘S knows p, but not-p’ often sounds improper.

We should also consider the fact that few find that ‘I remember p, but not-p’ and ‘I learned p, but not-p’ sound contradictory.

¹⁰ Kiparsky and Kiparsky, *op. cit.*, p. 348n

Argument 3: A (version of) epistemological internalism. Knowledge has a subjective and an objective component – in other words knowledge is a mental state of a certain kind (the subjective component) but possessing knowledge involves having achieved some connection to the world (the objective component). Knowledge differs from mere opinion (even mere opinion held with psychological certainty) in this regard. To know is to have achieved some connection with the world. Therefore, knowledge is factive.

Reply: This objection makes two assumptions that can be challenged. The first is the claim that knowledge has “two components.” Or, rather, what seems to me the suitable object of a challenge is the claim that the denotation of ‘knows’ – whatever relation ‘knows’ denotes – is one that has “two components.” Again, I leave open the possibility that knowledge is factive, but ‘knows’ isn’t. The second assumption this objection makes is that the (orthodox) truth condition is the only condition on knowledge that involves a “connection with the world.” This may be the case on certain kinds of internalist views about epistemic justification. If the notion of *epistemic justification* is conceptually independent of the notion of *truth*,¹¹ then a non-factive conception of knowledge would be a purely subjective conception of knowledge. I reject this assumption and adopt an externalist account of epistemic justification; I appeal to such an account in §4 in giving a pragmatics for knowledge attributions. In any case, those who believe that the truth condition is the *only* “world connection” condition have reason to reject a non-factive conception of knowledge, at least if they are convinced that knowledge has “two components.”

Argument 4: Infallibilism. Since knowledge requires infallible belief, knowledge requires truth, since no false belief is infallible.

Reply: David Lewis explicitly endorses this argument (which distinguishes him from all others, who offer no argument for the view that knowledge is factive),¹² and while it is not my business here to criticize infallibilism, I think that rejecting infallibilism as part of my criticism of the orthodox view is not out of line. I submit: the intuition that knowledge is factive may be tied up with the intuition that knowledge must be infallible.

¹¹ See Chisholm, R., *Theory of Knowledge*, third edition (Prentice-Hall, 1989), p. 76.

¹² Lewis, D., “Elusive Knowledge,” reprinted in *Papers in Metaphysics and Epistemology* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 418-445, at p. 426-27

The view that knowledge is factive looks plausible (even though it's false) because it is a consequence of the plausible (but false) infallibilism.

Austin observes that the view that knowledge is factive gains credibility because it appears to be a consequence of the truism "When you know, you can't be wrong."¹³ This truism could, of course, be interpreted in several ways, e.g. as meaning "If S knows p, then p" (i.e. that knowledge is factive), as meaning "If S knows p, then it must be logically impossible that $\sim p$ and that S have all the evidence that she has" (i.e. infallibilism), or as meaning "If S knows p, then $\sim p$ is incompatible with everything S knows," (where 'can't' is interpreted as epistemic) which is indeed a truism. I can't help but favor the interpretation of this truism *as* a truism. But regardless, it should be clear that if infallibilism is plausible, then so is the view that knowledge is factive. This may account for the appeal of the orthodox view.

4. Factivity without mythology

The 'factive verbs' mentioned at the outset do not form a sui generis semantic or syntactic category. Perhaps there is some sui generic semantic and syntactic category of expressions that deserves the name 'factive verbs' or 'factive expressions', but the list that philosophers usually offer does not comprise such a category. There are other expressions that are often called 'factive', including other two-place predicates relating a person to a proposition (e.g. 'is aware', 'regrets', 'takes into account', 'forgets'), adjectives (e.g. 'significant', 'tragic', 'relevant'), two-place predicates relating a propositions to a person (e.g. 'bothers', 'amuses'), and nouns (e.g. 'tragedy', 'coincidence'). What I have said so far is consistent with some or all of these expressions being 'factive', in some sense.

In saying that the expressions on our initial list are not factive, in the sense defined, am I saying that they are linguistically no different from such non-factive expressions as 'believes'? This would be a very implausible thing to say! For it is evident – at the very least – that our use of 'knows' (for example – and I will focus only on 'knows' in what follows) is quite different from our use of 'believes'. Typically an utterance of 'S knows

¹³ Austin, J., "Other Minds," reprinted in *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 76-116, at p. 97-8.

p' can be criticized if not-p; an utterance of 'S knows p' typically implies that p is true.¹⁴

This implication needs explaining. Consider some cases:

Case 1: Guaranteeing the truth of p.

A: Can we be sure that this one is of the genus *Calcinus*?

B: (1a) I *know* that this is a specimen of *Calcinus hazletti*.

Case 2: Reporting testimony that p.

A: Any information from the FBI about how the bomb was constructed?

B: (2a) They know that the bomb was homemade.

Case 3: Reporting the doxastic state of a third party, vis-à-vis p.

A: What is relevant is whether the suspect willingly committed a crime.

B: (3a) She *knew* that what she was doing was a crime.

I think it is important to dwell on the fact that these are quite different uses of 'knows', in the sense that the attribution of knowledge to someone (or some group) has a quite different purpose in the three cases. When B utters (1a) she, in some sense, promises A that p, ensures A that p, gives A her word that p.¹⁵ (Of course this is not incompatible with B continuing by giving reasons, e.g. 'See the distinctive coloration here', etc.) By uttering (2a), by contrast, B is not giving *her* word that the bomb was homemade, but she is *informing* A that the bomb was homemade. (Imagine that B continues: 'But they still don't know what sort of timer was used'.) Finally, in Case 3 the truth of p is not up for debate; the question is whether someone believed p at a certain time, and by uttering (3a) B informs A that the suspect did in fact believe p at that time. Now what is interesting about all three of these cases is that we could replace (1a) – (3a) with:

(1b) Trust me, this is a specimen of *Calcinus hazletti*.

(2b) They said that the bomb was homemade.

(3b) She was quite sure that what she was doing was a crime.

At least, these (b)-sentences could replace the (a)-sentences, above, with suitable but minor changes in the context, e.g. if (2b) is followed by 'But they still are unsure about what sort of timer was used'. So what does it mean that the (a)-sentences could be

¹⁴ I use the broad sense of 'implication' which covers (at least!) entailment, implicature, suggestion, and presupposition, i.e. that which includes what is said, what is entailed by what is said, what is implicated, and what is presupposed.

¹⁵ See Austin, op. cit., pp. 99-103

replaced by the (b)-sentences? Well, one thing that does *not* change, when we replace B's utterances of the (a)-sentences with utterances of the (b)-sentences, are the implications of B's utterances – in particular: that the creature is a member of *Calcinus*, that the bomb was homemade, and that the suspect committed a crime. This suggests – or so I want to suggest to you – that these implications are not entailments, since that the creature is a member of *Calcinus*, that the bomb was homemade, and that the suspect committed a crime are *not* entailed by (1b) – (3b).¹⁶

A further proof of this (noted by Grice) is that, in Case 3, an utterance of (4) implies that what the woman did was a crime just as much as an utterance of (3a):

(4) She did not know that what she was doing was a crime.¹⁷

In other words, in this context, the truth of p is implied by both 'S knows p' and 'S doesn't know p'. So the fact that there is an implication from 'S knows p' to the truth of p, in this case, gives us no reason to suppose that S knows p *entails* p, unless S's *not* knowing p entails p, which is absurd.

Then what does explain the implication from 'S knows p' to the truth of p, in these cases? I want to propose that the answer to this question is not quite the same in all three sorts of cases, and that perhaps in other sorts of cases it will be different, as well. This diversity of explanations reflects a diversity of uses that we have for 'knows', but I am not ashamed of this lack of parsimony. One mistake I think people have made is focusing too closely on one or another particular way of using 'knows'. The explanations I prefer, however, are all roughly Gricean in flavor. And to get these off the ground, we need some observations about the semantics of 'knows'. Knowledge that p requires, at least, two things: belief that p, and a sufficient quantity of epistemic justification for one's belief that p. I adopt an externalist account of epistemic justification, on which the

¹⁶ These implications are also not all presuppositions – so 'knows' is not factive in the sense that the use of a factive verb involves a presupposition of the truth of the proposition said to be known. It seems quite right to say that in uttering (3a) I presuppose the truth of the proposition that what she was doing was a crime. But it does not seem at all right to say that in uttering (1a) I *presuppose* the truth of the proposition that the creature is member of *Calcinus* – rather in uttering (1a) I *affirm* the truth of that proposition. Similarly, in uttering (2a) I do not *presuppose* the truth of the proposition that the bomb was homemade, rather I *inform* you of its truth.

¹⁷ See Grice, H.P., *Studies in the Way of Words* (Harvard, 1989), p. 279

notion of epistemic justification for a belief that p is to be defined in terms of the truth of p.¹⁸ It is a conceptual necessity, on this view, that justified beliefs tend to be true.

A second thesis we need is this: that it is mutually assumed by speakers the people generally conform to certain rules, including Grice's maxims. Below I'll appeal to Quality ('Do not say anything you believe to be false, or which you don't have reason to believe is true'), Quantity ('Make your contribution to a conversation as informative, and only as informative, as is required') and Relation ('Make your contribution to a conversation relevant').¹⁹

Consider Case 2 first. Since it is mutually assumed that speakers are conforming to Quantity and Relation, B's utterance of (2a) implicates that she believes that the bomb was homemade, and that she wishes her interlocutor to believe this as well – for otherwise she would say that they *think* that the bomb was homemade, but that there is not enough evidence to conclude that, or something to that effect. To attribute *knowledge* is to claim that the FBI possesses epistemic justification for their belief that the bomb was homemade, and to do this when one thinks that the bomb was not homemade would be misleading – since A is assuming that B will provide only relevant information. If B suspects that the bomb was not homemade, despite the FBI's possession of epistemic justification for the belief that the bomb was homemade, then she should not mention their epistemic justification. But to say that they *know* entails that they possess epistemic justification. In other words, it entails that their belief that the bomb was homemade is likely to be true. If B does not want her interlocutor to think that the bomb was homemade, she should not say anything that entails that it is likely that it is homemade (without explicitly disavowing any commitment to its being homemade).²⁰

Compare this to another case of an implicature generated by the mutual assumption of conformity to Quantity and Relation. The local's utterance of 'There's a gas station around the corner' implicates that the gas station is open to the public, but it does not

¹⁸ See Chisholm, *op. cit.* The broadest notion of externalism is one on which externalism is the denial of internalism, where internalism is construed as the claim that epistemic justification is not to be defined in terms of *any* 'external' criterion, including but not limited to the truth of the proposition believed.

¹⁹ See Grice, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-9

²⁰ Williamson writes: "If Φ is a FMSO ['factive mental state operator'], the implication from 'S Φ s that A' to 'A' is not cancelable." (*Knowledge and its Limits*, Oxford, 2000, p. 35). Cases like the case of (3), above, put the lie to this.

entail that the gas station is open to the public. If I am right, ‘S knows p’ implicates p, in cases like Case 2, but it does not entail p.

Consider, next, Case 3. A asks about whether the suspect *willingly* committed a crime, i.e. about whether she knew that what she was doing was a crime. Were B to reply that the suspect *thought* that what she was doing was a crime, A would have to ask herself: Why did B use the word ‘thought’ instead of ‘knew’? And she would have to conclude, on the assumption that her interlocutor was obeying Quality, that B did not *believe* that what the suspect did was a crime. But given that B *did not* use ‘thought’, our listener can assume that B accepts that the suspect committed a crime. (This is half of why we say that in this conversation it is *presupposed* that the suspect is committed a crime – the other half being the form of A’s question.)

Compare this to another case of presupposition. Imagine a student, familiar with O’Brien’s lectures, utters to a fellow classmate: ‘Professor O’Brien resisted the temptation to pontificate today’. Their presupposition, of course, is that O’Brien is prone to pontificate, and that she typically does so. But ‘Professor O’Brien resisted the temptation to pontificate today’ does not entail that O’Brien is prone to pontificate, nor that she typically does so. By the same token, so I contend, utterances of ‘S knows p’ in cases like Case 3, presuppose that p is true, but do not entail that p is true.

Consider, finally, Case 1. I follow Austin in maintaining that when someone says p, or otherwise commits herself to p, and is challenged with something like ‘Do you know p?’, she may either affirm that she does in fact know (and go on to give reasons for her belief that p), or she may say: ‘No, but I think p’ or ‘No, but I believe p’.²¹ Similarly, it is open to B, in Case 1, to respond to A with: ‘I do not *know* whether the creature is a member of *Calcinus*, but I think it is’. It is the fact that B *does not* respond in this way which makes her claim to know a guarantee. Again, to affirm that one knows is to affirm that one possesses justification. A guarantee that p, in the form of an utterance of ‘I know p’, is comparable to a promise to Φ , in the form of an utterance of ‘I fully intend to Φ ’. In both cases the listener must ask herself: Why is my interlocutor saying what she is

²¹ Austin, *op. cit.*, p. 77. See Weiner, M., “Must We Know What We Say?,” *Philosophical Review* 114:2 (2005), pp. 227-51

saying? And the answer ends up being, respectively: that she must be trying to ensure me that p, and that she must be trying to promise to Φ .²²

Again, just as ‘I fully intend to Φ ’ may suffice for a promise to Φ , even though it does not entail that I will Φ , ‘I know p’ may suffice (in cases like Case 1) for a guarantee that p, even though it does not entail that p is true.²³

To sum up: we can provide explanations of the implication from ‘S knows p’ to the truth of p, in various contexts, without a commitment to the view that knowledge is factive.²⁴ This should give the defender of the orthodox view pause. Does any reason remain to endorse the view that ‘knows’ is factive? I say the answer to this question is ‘No’. But what about the other ‘factive verbs’? One thing I have urged here is that ‘knows’ is not really kin to the expressions that we grouped it with at the outset. I do not maintain that anything like what I’ve said about ‘knows’ in this section could be said about ‘learns’, ‘remembers’, or ‘realizes’. These are different words, with different meanings, and a story of the ways we use these words will be different. The pragmatics of other supposedly ‘factive’ expressions deserves close study, as does the pragmatics of ‘knows’.*

²² See Searle, J., “Indirect Speech Acts,” in Cole and Morgan (eds.) *Syntax and Semantics III: Speech Acts* (Academic Press, 1975), pp. 59-82

²³ Austin says that if you turn out to be wrong, you did not really know, claiming an analogy with promising: if you fail to perform, you did not really promise. But this is wrong – broken promises are (sadly) a part of life. More to the point, even if I fail to promise (in some strict sense) when I utter ‘I fully intend to Φ ’, if it turns out that I fail to Φ , my utterance may still have perfectly true (i.e. I really did fully intend to Φ). I say the same about ‘I know p’, mutatis mutandis.

²⁴ The three cases discussed seem to me to cover a wide range of common uses of ‘knows’. But there are surely other uses. See, e.g., the discussion of ‘claims to knowledge’ in Warnock, G.J., “Claims to Knowledge,” in *Morality and Language* (Barnes and Noble, 1983), pp. 43-54.

* [Acknowledgements]