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P. A. M. Seuren

## Factivity

Factivity is a semantic property of certain predicates, 'factive predicates,' which take an embedded S-structure, preferably a *that*-clause, as subject or object. The *that*-clause of a factive predicate P is presupposed to be true when P is the main lexical predicate of a main clause (directly under a speech act of assertion, question, wish, command, etc.). Examples of factive predicates with factive object clauses are *know*, *realize*, *have forgotten*. Usually, the so-called affective factives are included, such as *regret*, *deplere*, *be delighted*. (*Un*)*forgivable*, *pity*, *regrettable* are predicates with factive subject clauses. Thus, *What a pity that she has left* presupposes that she has left. And *He hasn't forgotten that Bob played a trick on him* (with standard minimal, presupposition-preserving *not*) presupposes that Bob played a trick on him.

Sometimes a predicate may take a sentential subject as well as a sentential object clause. Such double complementation predicates are invariably factive with respect to their subject clause (though why this should be so is totally unknown). For example, a sentence like *That the butler had blood on his shirt suggested that he was the murderer* presupposes that the butler had blood on his shirt. Likewise for all verbs that take double complementation.

Factive verbs are intensional in that they block 'Substitution *salva veritate*' of coreferential terms: *Lucas realizes that the Morning Star is uninhabited* does not have the same truth-conditions as *Lucas realizes that the Evening Star is uninhabited*.

Some predicates are 'antifactive,' in that they induce a presupposition of the *falsity* of the embedded *that*-clause. For example, *be under the illusion* is an antifactive predicate. (Likewise for the German *wähnen*, used by Frege (1892: 47) in the first modern observation of factivity.)

In modern times, factivity was brought to the attention of the linguistic world by the article *Fact* (Kiparsky and Kiparsky 1971). These authors point out that factivity is not only a semantic but also a syntactic property, as factive predicates share a number of syntactic properties, in particular the impossibility of 'subject raising' from the imbedded clause, and the possibility of replacing *that* with *the fact that*. The only exception is the prototypical factive verb *know*, which seems to behave syntactically as a non-factive verb. This problem can be solved, in principle, by assuming that *know* has lexically incorporated the NP *the fact* as part of its object term, as in 'be aware of the fact that...'

*See also*: Lexical Conditions; Perception Verbs; Presupposition.

## Bibliography

- Frege G 1892 Über Sinn und Bedeutung. *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik* 100: 25–50  
Kiparsky P, Kiparsky C 1971 Fact. In: Steinberg D D, Jakobovits L A (eds.) *Semantics. An Interdisciplinary Reader in Philosophy,*