Knowledge, Conservatism, and Pragmatics

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Abstract

The apparent contextual variability exhibited by 'knows' and its cognates – brought to attention in examples like Keith DeRose's Bank Case – poses familiar problems for conservative forms of invariantism about 'knows'. The paper examines and criticises a popular response to those problems, one that involves appeal to so-called 'pragmatic' features of language. It is first argued, contrary to what seems to have been generally assumed, that any pragmatic defence faces serious problems with regard to our judgments about retraction. Second, the familiar objection that the pragmatic effects at issue do not seem to be cancellable is considered. Advocates of the pragmatic defence have suggested that cancellability concerns can be dealt with fairly readily. It is shown both that their recent attempts to respond to those concerns, and some other possible attempts, are unsuccessful. Finally, it is argued that the popular relevance-based accounts, found in the work of Jessica Brown, Alan Hazlett, and Patrick Rysiew, fail to provide a satisfactory explanation of our judgments.

1 Introduction

How should we respond to the apparent contextual variability exhibited by 'knows' and its cognates? One popular option is to reject some aspect of what we shall term 'The Conservative Package' (TCP). TCP is composed of three *prima facie* attractive theses:

(I) *Semantic Invariantism* – the thesis that the truth-conditions of knowledge ascriptions do not vary with context, at least not in any epistemologically interesting way.[1]

(II) *Intellectualism* – the thesis that knowledge does not constitutively depend on traditionally 'non-epistemic' features of the subject's situation, such as how much the subject has at stake.

(III) *Anti-Scepticism* – the thesis that many of our everyday knowledge ascriptions are true.[2]

Recent work has shown that departures from TCP – in particular, the rejection of (I) or (II) – are far from cost free. Given the central role that the apparent contextual variability exhibited by 'knows' has played in motivating such departures, we feel that more attention should be paid to attempts to explain that variability in ways consistent with the retention of our three conservative theses. Among philosophers sympathetic to TCP, one species of explanation that has proven popular invokes *pragmatic* features of language.

Pragmatic accounts face some well-known challenges. Perhaps central among these are addressing the cancellability concerns raised by, among others, Stewart Cohen (1999) and providing an account that meets the general constraints on pragmatic explanation proposed by Keith DeRose (1999, 2002, 2009). Advocates of the pragmatic account have not been insensitive to these challenges. Several solutions to cancellability concerns have been proposed, and in regard to DeRose's constraints, it has been argued – for instance in Brown (2006) – that each constraint is either possible to meet or implausible.

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[1] Cf. Stanley (2005, p. 16). For present purposes, let us just stipulate that we are using the term 'semantic invariantism' in such a way as to also exclude forms of relativism about 'knows'. See MacFarlane (2005; 2011) and Richard (2004) for prominent defences of relativism.

[2] To avoid potential dispute, let us also just stipulate that commitment to 'anti-scepticism' involves commitment to the claim that, in examples like the 'Bank Cases' presented below, the knowledge ascription in the 'LOW' context is true.

Our goal is pick up on this debate, and argue that, despite these various efforts, the pragmatic defence of TCP is not successful. The criticisms we present target both specific pragmatic proposals and the general strategy of invoking pragmatic phenomena to explain the apparent contextual variability exhibited by 'knows'. In rough outline, our critique proceeds as follows. In Sect. 2, we introduce the cases that have been thought to motivate a departure from TCP. In Sect. 3, we outline the pragmatic response to those cases, and discuss an initial objection. In Sect. 4, we introduce our first main objection, arguing that pragmatic defences of TCP face serious problems in regard to our judgments about retraction. In Sect. 4, we breathe new life into an old, but powerful, objection, arguing that there still exists no good response to the cancellability concerns mentioned above. The objections of Sect. 4 and Sect. 5 represent general problems for all pragmatic defences of TCP. They also serve to illustrate the stark contrasts between even the more controversial cases of pragmatic phenomena in the literature, and the case of knowledge ascriptions. Finally, in Sect. 6, we introduce an objection targeting specifically those pragmatic accounts that involve appeal to the notion of conversational relevance, such as those defended by Brown (2006; 2006), Hazlett (2009), and Rysiew (2001; 2007).

2 The Cases

One classic manifestation of the contextual variability present in our use of 'knows' is found in the so-called 'Bank Cases' put forward by Keith DeRose. These cases shall serve as our initial focus.[3]

Bank Case A. My wife and I are driving home on a Friday afternoon. We plan to stop at the bank on the way home to deposit our paychecks. But as we drive past the bank, we notice that the lines inside

[3] See DeRose (1992, p. 913) for his original presentation of the Bank Cases. See also Stewart Cohen's (1999, p. 58) so-called 'Airport Case'. Similar judgments seem to arise in lottery cases and in examples involving scepticism about the external world. As our judgments concerning examples like the Bank Cases have been the main explanatory focus of our opponents, we will focus on pragmatic explanations of those judgments here. However, we believe our criticisms pass over in fairly straightforward ways to pragmatic explanations of scepticism and lottery cases. For pragmatic treatments of judgments associated with external world scepticism, see Black (2008) and Pritchard (2010).

are very long, as they often are on Friday afternoons. Although we generally like to deposit our paychecks as soon as possible, it is not especially important in this case that they be deposited right away, so I suggest that we drive straight home and deposit our paychecks on Saturday morning. My wife says, 'Maybe the bank won't be open tomorrow. Lots of banks are closed on Saturdays.' I reply, 'No, I know it'll be open. I was there two weeks ago on Saturday. It's open until noon.'

Bank Case B. My wife and I drive past the bank on a Friday afternoon, as in case A, and notice the long lines. I again suggest that we deposit our paychecks on Saturday morning, explaining that I was at the bank on Saturday morning two weeks ago and discovered that it was open until noon. But in this case, we have just written a very large and very important check. If our paychecks are not deposited into our checking account before Monday morning, the important check we wrote will bounce, leaving us in a *very* bad situation. And, of course, the bank is not open on Sunday. My wife reminds me of these facts. She then says, 'Banks do change their hours. Do you know that the bank will be open tomorrow?' Remaining as confident as I was before that the bank will be open then, still, I reply, 'Well, no, I don't know. I'd better go in and make sure.' (DeRose 2009, p. 1-2)

Call the context that DeRose and his wife occupy in Bank Case A 'LOW', and the context they occupy in Bank Case B 'HIGH'. DeRose's utterance of (1) in LOW seems both appropriate and true.[4]

(1) I know it'll be open.

And his utterance of (2) in HIGH also seems both appropriate and true.

(2) I don't know it'll be open.[5]

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[4] In what follows, we are going to be fairly liberal about the attribution of truth and falsity to propositions, sentences, and utterances. As far as we can tell, nothing that we say turns on this.

Furthermore, were DeRose to respond to his wife's question 'Do you know that the bank will be open on Saturday' by uttering (1) in HIGH, that utterance would seem inappropriate and false.[6]

3 The Pragmatic Response and an Initial Objection

Those who have sought a pragmatic defence of TCP assume that (1) is true and (2) is false as uttered by DeRose in both LOW and HIGH.[7]

(1) I know it'll be open.

(2) I don't know it'll be open.

On this picture, our judgment that DeRose's utterance of (1) in LOW seems appropriate and true can be straightforwardly explained by appeal to the fact that his utterance semantically expresses a truth. The challenge is to explain why it seems appropriate and true for DeRose to utter (2) in HIGH and why it seems inappropriate and false for DeRose to utter (1) in HIGH. The pragmatic response to this challenge is centred on the claim that an utterance of (2) in HIGH pragmatically conveys something true, while an utterance of (1) in HIGH pragmatically conveys something false.[8]

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[5] The example has been modified slightly to make it more explicit.

[6] It might be suggested that the envisaged utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH merely seems inappropriate. This is acceptable for us: our criticisms of the pragmatic defence of TCP (Sects. 4, 5 and 6) do not rest on the assumption that an utterance of (1) in HIGH seems false.

[7] One salient feature of the Bank Cases is that they are centred on knowledge ascriptions and denials made in the first person – claims of the form 'I know that *p*' and 'I don't know that *p*' – rather than in the third person. It might be objected that such 'first person cases' do not allow us to distinguish between standard contextualist accounts, which differ from TCP in their rejection of invariantism, and standard forms of anti-intellectualism, which differ from TCP in their rejection of intellectualism. However, given our present purpose is not to decide between the various possible alternatives to TCP, but instead to reveal the implausibility of a particular defence of TCP, this is no objection to our focus on first person cases. Whenever the difference between first person and third person cases becomes important to our critique, we will make this explicit.

[8] Our talk of what is 'pragmatically conveyed' or 'pragmatically implicated' by an utterance should be interpreted in as theory-neutral a fashion as possible. To make our criticisms broadly applicable, we wish to remain neutral on such issues as whether the advocate of TCP must claim that a conversational

An initial issue with the pragmatic response concerns the nature of our judgments regarding utterances of (1) and (2) in HIGH. Consider a familiar example.[9] Suppose Mary is reviewing applications for an academic post in her department, but has not met a particular applicant, Mr. X. Mary asks John, who is better acquainted than she is with Mr. X, if Mr. X is a good philosopher. John replies by uttering (3).

(3) His English is excellent and he attends seminars regularly.

John's utterance pragmatically conveys that Mr. X is not a good philosopher. Suppose that Mr. X's English is excellent and his seminar attendance has been exemplary, but that he is in fact a good philosopher. In that case, we can still recognise that John's utterance of (3) is true, even though he has pragmatically conveyed something false. Now suppose instead that Mr. X's English is not very good and his seminar attendance has been sporadic, but that he is indeed a poor philosopher. In that case, it is still clear that John's utterance of (3) is false, even though he has succeeded in pragmatically conveying something true.

So why do we not also readily recognise the falsehood of an utterance of (2) in HIGH and the truth of an utterance of (1) in HIGH? Those sympathetic to a pragmatic defence of TCP respond by suggesting that we are disposed either to confuse what utterances of (1) and (2) pragmatically convey with what

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implicature, in Grice's (1975) original sense, is present. However, note that at least Hazlett (2009, p. 609) claims that the pragmatic effect associated with knowledge ascriptions is a conversational implicature.

It might be suggested that it is possible to provide a pragmatic explanation of our Bank Case judgments that does not involve appeal to 'pragmatic implication' in any natural sense. This might be appropriate, for example, for the kind of view discussed in DeRose (2002, p. 177-179; 2009, p. 89-92) and defended in Pritchard (2010). Our critical arguments could just as readily be used against such a position.

[9] The example is adapted from Grice (1975, p. 33).

they semantically express, or to focus on what they pragmatically convey.[10] The extent to which this response is acceptable presumably depends on the extent to which we exhibit such a disposition in other examples of pragmatic phenomena (assuming there is no special reason to think pragmatic effects associated with knowledge ascriptions should be different from other pragmatic effects). DeRose (1999, §10-11; 2002, p. 192-3; 2009, p. 114-5) claims – in essence – that in cases where a speaker utters a falsehood in order to pragmatically convey a truth, the utterance does not seem appropriate and true. If he is right, that suggests that it is rather implausible to postulate semantics-pragmatics confusion (or a disposition to focus on what is pragmatically conveyed) in order to explain our judgment regarding DeRose's utterance of (2) in HIGH.

However, as Brown (2006, p. 415-419) has pointed out, there are some more controversial cases of pragmatic phenomena where we find judgments similar to those found in the Bank Cases. Suppose that Frank is considering preparing dinner for himself and his two roommates, Mary and John. Frank tells Mary his thoughts about preparing dinner, and Mary utters (4).[11]

(4) John has eaten.

Suppose that John has had nothing to eat all day, and that Mary is aware of this. In that case, Mary's utterance of (4) seems inappropriate and false. But if Mary were to utter (5), her utterance would seem appropriate and true.

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[10] For the former suggestion, see Brown (2006, p. 428), Hazlett (2009, p. 610), and Rysiew (2001, p. 496; 2007, p. 640). For the latter, see Rysiew (2001, p. 486-7).

[11] Cases featuring utterances of (4) are putative instances of what Bach (1994) terms 'implic*i*ture'. Brown (2006, p. 415-6) highlights another (controversial) case, featuring referential uses of definite descriptions, in which we also find similar judgments to those found in the Bank Cases. There are plausibly other (still controversial) cases besides – pragmatic treatments of contextually restricted quantification, for example. The example involving (4) is, however, representative of these cases in all the respects that will concern us here.

(5) John hasn't eaten.

According to one proposal – admittedly very controversial – what is semantically expressed by (4) is that John has eaten at some past time, and what is semantically expressed by (5) is that John has never eaten. On this account – and supposing that John has indeed eaten at some past time – Mary's utterance of (4) is true, and her utterance of (5) is false. So why does the former seem inappropriate and false and the latter seem appropriate and true? The proposal is that, in virtue of the operation of some pragmatic mechanism, Mary's utterance of (4) conveys the falsehood that John has eaten recently, and her utterance of (5) conveys the truth that John has not eaten recently.

If this proposal were correct, our judgments concerning the example would suggest that we are disposed either to confuse what utterances of (4) and (5) pragmatically convey with what they semantically express, or to focus on what they pragmatically convey. So assuming that the pragmatic account of (4) and (5) is correct, it does not seem implausible to claim that we exhibit a similar disposition in the case of knowledge ascriptions. It is of course very controversial whether cases featuring utterances of (4) and (5) should receive a pragmatic, rather than a semantic, treatment. But we are going to set such concerns aside. One central goal for the paper is to show that even assuming that cases featuring (4) and (5) warrant a pragmatic explanation, there remain serious problems for any pragmatic defence of TCP. In the next section, we begin by arguing that considerations involving retraction put pressure on proponents of a pragmatic defence of TCP to postulate another, far more problematic, kind of semantics-pragmatics confusion.

4 Retraction

Retraction judgments have played an important role in recent criticisms of contextualism.[12] It seems to have been assumed that these judgments sit well with TCP. We shall argue that these judgments actually represent a serious problem for the kind of pragmatic defence of TCP we have been considering.

Suppose that DeRose utters (1) in LOW.

(1) I know it'll be open.

Now suppose that, later that day, DeRose finds himself in a context like HIGH, in which more is at stake and relatively distant error possibilities are being considered. For example, suppose that a friend who has an important cheque coming due has approached DeRose and his wife and raised the possibility that the bank has changed its hours. Suppose DeRose utters (2) in response to his friend's question 'Do you know that the bank will be open?'.

(2) I don't know it'll be open.

Such an utterance seems appropriate and true. But where does this leave DeRose with regard to his previous utterance of (1) in LOW? Suppose that DeRose's wife challenges him over his previous utterance of (1) – 'Didn't you say earlier that you knew the bank would be open?'. In that case, it

[12] See e.g MacFarlane (2005, §2.3).

seems natural and appropriate for DeRose to admit that what he said earlier is false and retract his previous assertion.[13,14]

It should be emphasised that we are not assuming that DeRose's only option is to retract his previous assertion. There might well be more than one appropriate response available to DeRose. All that we are assuming is that if DeRose were to retract his previous assertion and admit that he said something false, that would be a natural and appropriate response.[15]

The problem is that this is rather mysterious if the kind of pragmatic proposal we have been considering is on the right track. After all, DeRose's earlier utterance of (1) in LOW was supposed to be true and to convey nothing false. So why would it seem natural and appropriate for him to retract that assertion?[16]

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[13] DeRose may of course attempt to retract but *excuse* his previous assertion, perhaps by uttering something along the lines of 'What I said is false, but I was obviously speaking a little loosely'. Such a response seems natural, but that fact actually seems to make the situation worse for the advocate of the pragmatic account. See footnote 17 for relevant discussion.

[14] Similar judgments are reported in Hawthorne (2004, p. 163), Williamson (2005a, §II), MacFarlane (2005, §2.3), Stanley (2005, p. 115), Davis (2007, p. 399-400), and elsewhere. Notice that this list includes those who defend views apparently impugned by such judgments – for example, advocates of subject sensitive invariantism (SSI), such as Hawthorne and Stanley. Cohen (2001, p. 89; 2004, p. 191-2), a prominent defender of contextualism, also assumes that our retraction judgments have the kind of character presented. DeRose (2006, p. 322-3; 2009, p. 161) is an exception. He defends a form of contextualism and reports, in regard to similar cases, that he has the opposite judgments about cases of retraction.

[15] An anonymous referee suggested to us that if DeRose's wife waits to challenge DeRose until after his friend has left, DeRose might appropriately respond by saying that he knows that the bank will be open, but that he did not feel comfortable saying that to his friend, given how much his friend has at stake. As long as it is granted that there are ways of fleshing out the case such that it seems appropriate for DeRose to retract his earlier assertion and admit that what he said is false, observations like these do not undermine the objection we are about to press. As we pointed out in footnote 14, the claim that there are ways of fleshing out the case such that it seems appropriate for DeRose to retract his earlier assertion seems to be well-supported in the literature.

[16] Note that the advocate of TCP has no special reason to think that knowledge of knowledge is especially hard to come by. We can therefore also assume that in his current context (resembling HIGH) DeRose *knows* that he knew (when in LOW) that the bank will be open.

Furthermore, we do not find these sorts of judgments in cases involving other pragmatic phenomena. That includes both uncontroversial cases, like those involving utterances of (3), and the more controversial cases, like those involving utterances of (4), which seemed to provide a model for the kind of semantics-pragmatics confusion or tendency to focus on what is pragmatically conveyed present in our judgments about the Bank Case.

(3) His English is excellent and he attends seminars regularly.

(4) John has eaten.

An example involving (4) can serve as an illustration. On the proposed account, an utterance of (1) by DeRose in LOW seems appropriate and true because it primarily conveys what it semantically expresses – viz. that DeRose knows that the bank will be open – and what it semantically expresses is true. To get a case analogous to DeRose's utterance of (1) in LOW, we therefore need a case in which (4) also primarily conveys what it semantically expresses – viz. that John has eaten at some past time. Suppose that Mary utters (4) in a context in which what is being discussed is the (rather fatuous) question of whether John has ever eaten. Assuming that John has eaten at some past time, Mary's utterance of (4) will be true and will convey nothing false.

Now suppose that shortly after the discussion of whether John has ever eaten, Mary finds herself in a context in which someone asks her if they should prepare a meal for John. As is familiar from the discussion in Sect. 3, in such a context, an utterance of (5) by Mary would convey that John has not eaten recently.

(5) John hasn't eaten.

Suppose that having uttered (5), Mary is challenged over her previous utterance of (4). In that case, Mary may wish to clarify what she was trying to convey by her respective utterances of (4) and (5), but it would be strange for her to retract her original assertion. If she were to claim that what she said earlier was false, for example, that claim would seem clearly false.

Thus, while the cases appear to exhibit some important similarities, there are important differences between even this case and the case of knowledge ascriptions. Can the advocate of TCP respond to these concerns? One option is to claim that DeRose's attempt to retract his earlier assertion conveys something true. Perhaps this is why it seems appropriate for DeRose to retract his earlier assertion. One central problem with this response is that the advocate of TCP would have to explain why we do not find similar effects in other examples of pragmatic phenomena. For instance, why would a retraction attempt convey something true in cases featuring (1) when it does not do so in cases featuring (4)?

Furthermore, as John MacFarlane (2005) has pointed out, one can set up the HIGH context in such a way that it is a particularly relevant issue whether or not the earlier knowledge claim was true. For example, suppose that after having uttered (1) in LOW, DeRose later finds himself in a courtroom. Suppose that the courtroom context is similar to HIGH – the presiding judge has just raised the possibility that the bank has changed its hours and there is a lot at stake – and that DeRose utters (2). The judge then questions DeRose about his earlier utterance of (1), implying that DeRose may be a rather vagarious and unreliable witness. It seems that, given the circumstances, DeRose really ought to stand by the truth of his earlier assertion if that is possible. After all, it was true, and conveyed nothing false. Nevertheless, even with the case reconstructed in this way, it seems appropriate for DeRose to retract his earlier assertion.[17]

[17] Of course, it may be natural, especially in this kind of case, for DeRose to not only retract his earlier assertion but also attempt to excuse it. In this vein, he might respond to the judge along the following

Another option for the invariantist is to postulate further semantics-pragmatics confusion. It might be suggested that DeRose thinks that what he conveyed by uttering (1) in LOW is the same as what he would manage to convey by uttering (1) in a context like HIGH. Postulating such confusion seems to explain why DeRose would retract his earlier assertion. Perhaps the account can be extended to explain why it also seems appropriate to us for him to retract his assertion. But even supposing it can, the suggestion is fairly radical. The proposal is not merely that we confuse what is pragmatically conveyed by an utterance with what it semantically expresses. The proposal is instead that we confuse what is semantically expressed by an utterance, not with what it pragmatically conveys, but with what is pragmatically conveyed by an utterance of the same sentence in some *other* context. But given DeRose is fully aware of the relevant differences between the two contexts, why would he do that?

Moreover, we do not see similar judgments about retraction in other cases of pragmatic phenomena (including the more controversial ones). As a result, the invariantist would not only be postulating a rather mysterious kind of semantics-pragmatics confusion, but also a kind of semantics-pragmatics confusion that we do not find in other cases of pragmatic phenomena. Why would knowledge ascriptions be special in this way? Our judgments about retraction seem to present a serious objection to any pragmatic defence of TCP.

Of course, considerations involving retraction have also been taken to present problems for certain non-traditional views – in particular, contextualism and the leading form of anti-intellectualism,

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lines: 'What I said is false, but c'mon! I was obviously speaking a little loosely – I wasn't in a courtroom back then' (cf. footnote 13). However, this actually seems to make the situation worse for the defender of the pragmatic account. First, DeRose was not only speaking truly but presumably also *strictly* in uttering (1) in LOW, since his earlier utterance of (1) presumably conveyed just what it semantically expressed. Second, such a judgment is nothing like the judgments we find in parallel examples featuring other (putatively) pragmatic phenomena, such as the cases featuring utterances of (3) and (4). In those cases, it seems both unnatural and false for the speaker to utter, in reference to her earlier claim, 'What I said is false, but obviously I was speaking a little loosely', and perhaps especially so if the later context is set up to resemble a courtroom environment.

subject sensitive invariantism (SSI). This does not render those judgments insignificant. Even if we are only interested in comparing contextualism and SSI with a pragmatic defence of TCP – a rather narrow way of looking at the debate – it still leaves the conservative pragmatic view in a weaker dialectical position than one might have thought. We should also be careful not to assume that responses that contextualists or subject sensitive invariantists might offer to our retraction judgments are responses that defenders of TCP can also offer.[18] Finally, other views, including other defences of TCP, do not seem subject to similar problems. The failure to adequately account for our retraction judgments represents a genuine problem for pragmatic defences of TCP.

The upshot of the present discussion is that those who propose a pragmatic defence of TCP cannot have their cake and eat it too. Insofar as they want to make similar predictions as certain non-traditional accounts in regard to examples like the Bank Cases, they also run the risk of inheriting some of the problems of those accounts.[19]

5 Cancellability

In the preceding discussion, little has been said about exactly what utterances of (1) and (2) by DeRose in HIGH might pragmatically convey.

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[18] Cohen (1999, 2001, 2004) suggests that we find retraction judgments similar to those found in the case of 'knows' in the case of the plausibly context sensitive expression 'flat'. He therefore argues that those judgments represent little problem for contextualist accounts of 'knows'. Notice that a parallel response does not seem to be open to the advocate of the pragmatic account. As we have seen, we do not seem to find retraction judgments similar to those found in the case of 'knows' in examples of other (putatively) pragmatic phenomena.

[19] Judgments about disagreement have also been thought to raise problems for non-traditional accounts like contextualism. Montminy (2009) argues that these judgments might also represent a problem for pragmatic defences of invariantism. However, such a disagreement-based objection rests on some potentially controversial claims about the presence of disagreement in the relevant cases, and also on a potentially controversial assumption to the effect that it is insufficient for disagreement that there is a contradiction at the level of what is semantically expressed by the relevant utterances. Our retraction based objection fares better in both respects. The objection does not rest on potentially controversial assumptions about disagreement, and the retraction judgments are widely reported in the literature. See footnote 14 for relevant references.

(1) I know it'll be open

(2) I don't know it'll be open

But given the circumstances in the Bank Cases, it is likely to be something broadly connected to DeRose's epistemic position. For example, perhaps utterances of (1) and (2) in HIGH pragmatically convey, respectively, that DeRose can and cannot rule out the possibility that the bank has changed its hours. Or perhaps an utterance of (1) conveys that DeRose and his wife do not need to engage in further inquiry, whereas an utterance of (2) conveys that they do.[20]

One familiar objection to the pragmatic defence of TCP, an objection pressed by Stewart Cohen (1999), concerns the cancellability of these pragmatic implications. To get a handle on the issue, let us first consider an example.[21] B's response in (6) seems to convey that the garage is open.

(6) A: I've run out of gas. Is there a garage nearby?

B: There's one round the corner.

On one account, this is because B's utterance pragmatically conveys that the garage is open. This putative pragmatic implication can be cancelled. For example, suppose B utters (7).

(7) There's one round the corner, but it isn't open.

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[20] It could be proposed that knowledge ascriptions and denials pragmatically convey something about appropriate action or reasoning. For example, perhaps an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH conveys that he is able to rely on the proposition that the bank will be open in his practical reasoning, while an utterance of (2) conveys that he is not able to rely on that proposition. Whether DeRose can rely on the proposition that the bank will be open in his practical reasoning is obviously broadly connected to his epistemic position, but let us just make clear that we intend the discussion in the present section to apply generally to pragmatic defences of TCP, and, in particular, to apply to pragmatic proposals that appeal to practical reasoning and action just as much as those proposals that involve a more overt connection between what is pragmatically conveyed and the subject's epistemic position.

[21] The example is drawn from Grice (1975, p. 32).

By uttering (7), B successfully cancels any pragmatic implication that the garage is open. More generally, suppose a speaker pragmatically conveys that *p* by uttering a certain sentence. Following Grice (1978), we take this pragmatic implication to be cancellable just in case the speaker can felicitously add something like 'but not-*p*' and thereby avoid any commitment to *p*.[22]

There is an expectation that any putative pragmatic implication should be cancellable.[23] A general problem for pragmatic defences of TCP is that the pragmatic implication required to explain the inappropriateness of DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH does not seem to be cancellable. For example, in his discussion of cancellability, Cohen (1999, p. 60) points out that utterances of (8) are very uncomfortable.

(8) We know, but we need to investigate further.

Similarly, utterances of (9a)-(9c) by DeRose in HIGH would be infelicitous.

(9) a. I know that the bank will be open, but I cannot rule out that it has changed its hours.

b. I know that the bank will be open, but I'm not in a strong enough position for us to rely on it being open.

c. I know that the bank will be open, but it is possible that it has changed its hours.

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[22] It should be noted that we are interested in whether a putative pragmatic implication is explicitly cancellable and not just whether it is contextually cancellable. The latter requires only that there is a context in which an utterance of the relevant sentence does not carry the relevant implication.

[23] The point that implicatures are supposed to be cancellable does not apply to so-called 'conventional implicatures'. We do not seek to criticise a view based on such implicatures here. But note that it is unclear how to develop such an account without encountering the retraction objection pressed in the previous section. For some further objections to a conventional implicature-based story of the sort required to explain what is going on in the Bank Cases, see the appendix of Fantl & McGrath (2007).

There are two broad strategies the invariantist can pursue at this point. The first is to argue that even though the pragmatic implication at issue is not cancellable, this is not a problem. The second is to suggest that, *contra* initial appearances, the relevant pragmatic implication is in fact cancellable. We evaluate each in turn.

5.1 Option 1: The Implication is not Cancellable

The first response is to claim that even if the putative pragmatic effect is not cancellable, that is not a problem. This is not a claim that should be taken lightly. In the literature on conversational implicatures, cancellability is regarded as a crucial test when it comes to determining whether a conversational implicature is present. For example, Grice (1978, p. 44) says that he thinks that 'all conversational implicatures are cancelable', Sadock (1978, p. 372) claims that cancellability is 'the best of the tests' for conversational implicatures, and Levinson (1983, p. 114) suggests that of the properties of conversational implicatures 'perhaps the most important, is that they are cancellable'.

We do not wish to assume that the kind of pragmatic implication invoked by the invariantist must be a conversational implicature. But it does seem that the reasons for taking conversational implicatures to be cancellable apply to pragmatic implications more generally. For instance, Levinson (1983, p. 114) supports the claim that conversational implicatures are cancellable by pointing out that they represent the conclusions of defeasible inferences. The inference in question is one from features of the contextual situation (including the background knowledge of the participants), the general rules governing conversation, and what is semantically expressed by the target utterance. It seems that there is an expectation that such an inference should be defeasible – that is, that it should be possible to block the inference by the introduction of further premises. And that is exactly what a speaker typically achieves by adding something along the lines of 'but not *p*' to his original utterance. He introduces the premise that not-*p*, thereby blocking any pragmatic inference to *p* and so cancelling the

implication that *p*. But any invariantist proposal in the case of knowledge ascriptions is going to be committed to the idea that the putative implication represents the conclusion of an inference from features of the contextual situation, the general rules governing conversation, and what is semantically expressed by the target knowledge ascription. There is therefore every reason to think that the implication should *also* represent the conclusion of a defeasible inference, whether or not it turns out to be a conversational implicature. Consequently, there is an expectation that the implication should be cancellable.

Nevertheless, Matthew Weiner (2006) has recently argued that even some conversational implicatures are not cancellable.[24] Suppose Mary utters (10) to John, who is taking up several seats on a crowded train.

(10) I'm curious as to whether it would be physically possible for you to make room for someone else to sit down.

Weiner notes that Mary thereby conveys that John should make room for someone else to sit down. However, this pragmatic implication does not appear to be cancellable.

(11) I'm curious as to whether it would be physically possible for you to make room for someone else to sit down. Not that you should move. I'm just curious.

Even with the addition of the extra material in (11), the implication is still not cancelled. By uttering (11), Mary would still convey that John should make room for someone else to sit down.

[24] Rysiew (2007, p. 639) and Hazlett (2009, p. 608) cite Weiner's (2006) paper in their discussions of cancellability.

Let us just grant that this shows that not all pragmatic implications are cancellable. This might seem to represent a source of hope for the invariantist. But she should be careful. First, cases like Weiner's do not show that the majority of pragmatic implications are not cancellable. Second, there is clearly a reason why the pragmatic implication associated with (10) is not cancellable.[25] The attempts to cancel the implication are naturally interpreted as attempts at further irony. In fact, this feature is common to all of Weiner's cases. In each case, attempts to cancel the implication at issue are naturally interpreted as involving irony. The more general point that Weiner's examples seem to illustrate is that there can be further pragmatic effects associated with a cancellation attempt that make it difficult to cancel the original implication.[26]

In light of these observations, it seems that it would be an over-reaction to conclude that a failure of cancellability does not provide evidence against the presence of a pragmatic implication. Instead, it seems more reasonable to say that the invariantist must provide an explanation of why the pragmatic implication allegedly generated by an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH is not cancellable. If she can do that, she will have gone a long way towards defusing the cancellability objection. But if she cannot, the objection remains in force.

In what follows, we consider and reject what we take to be the most promising ways of carrying out this explanatory task. There is, however, an initial complication. It is not clear exactly what an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH is supposed to convey. It is therefore not clear which cancellation attempts we should be considering. For the purpose of the following discussion, we will simply focus

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[25] It is also worth pointing out that even though Mary's utterance of (11) does not cancel the relevant pragmatic implication, it is not infelicitous. In that respect, Mary's utterance of (11) differs from utterances of (8) or (9a) by DeRose in HIGH, which seem infelicitous. This might suggest that we are dealing with different phenomena.

[26] There are some further examples of pragmatic implications that do not seem to be cancellable, but that do not involve irony. As Davis (2007, p. 411) observes, in examples where what is semantically expressed entails what is pragmatically conveyed, the implications cannot be cancelled. Once again, however, there is a clear explanation for why the implication in such examples cannot be cancelled. In attempting to cancel the implication, the speaker would be contradicting herself.

on (8) and (9a). But what we have to say also applies to the other examples introduced at the start of Sect. 5.

Brown (2006, p. 428) suggests that we should expect it to be more difficult to cancel a pragmatic implication in cases in which we confuse what is pragmatically conveyed with what is semantically expressed (see also Rysiew 2007, p. 646). However, this is not what we find in other cases of pragmatic phenomena that allegedly involve this kind of confusion. For instance, the putative pragmatic implication associated with Mary's utterance of (4) is cancellable.

(4) John has eaten.

The putative pragmatic implication that John has eaten recently is cancelled in (12).

(12) John has eaten, but not recently.

The invariantist could claim that the semantics-pragmatics confusion associated with knowledge ascriptions is different from the semantics-pragmatics confusion that is allegedly associated with (4). In Sect. 4 we argued that there is already some pressure towards that kind of conclusion, but we also pointed out that it is very problematic. In the absence of some reason to believe that there should be a special kind of semantics-pragmatics confusion associated with knowledge ascriptions, this kind of response should be rejected.

Rysiew (2001, p. 496; see also 2007, p. 646) suggests that when a pragmatic implication is nearly universal, we should expect it to be more difficult to cancel. He claims that utterances of (14) are

uncomfortable. And he claims that they are uncomfortable because utterances of (13) nearly universally convey that the relevant individuals fell in love first and got married later.

(13) They fell in love and got married.

(14) They fell in love and got married, but not in that order.

Rysiew then goes on to suggest that the reason cancellation attempts are uncomfortable in the case of knowledge ascriptions is that such ascriptions nearly universally convey that the subject can rule out the salient alternatives. It is important to note that in HIGH, but not in LOW, it is a salient alternative that the bank has changed its hours. On Rysiew's account, this explains the variation exhibited in our Bank Case judgments.

An initial problem for this response concerns the character of our judgments. Let us grant that there is some discomfort in uttering (14). Nevertheless, an utterance of (14) is nothing like as uncomfortable as an utterance of (8) or (9a). While judgments are likely to differ over examples like these, we are inclined to say that an utterance of (8) or (9a) would be straightforwardly infelicitous, while the discomfort associated with uttering (14) is comparatively small.

In any case, the response rests on two assumptions, both of which are dubious. The first assumption is that what is pragmatically conveyed by a knowledge ascription is universal in the relevant sense. This is not obvious. If we keep the reference of 'they' fixed, (13) conveys the same thing about the order in which the individuals fell in love and got married in nearly all contexts. However, there is an important sense in which what is pragmatically conveyed by utterances of (1) does not exhibit this sort of stability. On Rysiew's proposal, it seems that in some contexts, utterances of (1) will convey that the speaker can rule out one set of alternatives, but in other contexts, they will convey that the speaker

can rule out wholly different sets of alternatives. From that point of view, it is not clear that what is conveyed by DeRose's utterance of (1) counts as universal in the relevant sense.[27]

The second assumption is that we should expect cancellations to be more difficult in cases in which what is pragmatically conveyed is nearly universal. This is also problematic. It is far from clear that the universal character of the implication is what explains any discomfort with (14). There are a great many implications with such universal character that are comfortably cancelled. For instance, an utterance of (15) will nearly always generate a scalar implicature to the effect that not all of the students passed.

(15) Some of the students passed.

However, that implicature can easily be cancelled, as illustrated by (16).

(16) Some of the students passed. In fact, they all did.

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[27] This does not rule out the possibility that there is another and nearly universal pragmatic implication associated with knowledge ascriptions. An anonymous referee suggested to us that an utterance of a sentence of the form 'S knows that *p*' could universally pragmatically convey that S is able to rely on *p*. This pragmatic implication might seem to be universal in the same sense as the implication associated with utterances of (13). However, claiming that knowledge ascriptions generally pragmatically convey that S is able to rely on *p* does not seem sufficient to explain all of the cases at issue. In particular, that pragmatic effect seems unsuited to explain our judgments about cases that feature an attributor in a situation like HIGH and a subject in a situation like LOW. For an example of such a case, see DeRose's (2009, p. 4-5) case involving Thelma and Louise. In such cases, it can seem inappropriate for the speaker who is in a context that is similar to HIGH to attribute knowledge of the proposition at issue *q* to the subject who is in a context that is similar to LOW even if the case is set up such that it seems appropriate for the speaker who is in the context that is similar to HIGH to assert *q*. But this cannot be explained by appeal to the idea that the knowledge attribution pragmatically conveys that the subject can rely on *q*, since, given the subject occupies a context that is similar to LOW, this implication is presumably true. To amend the proposal to handle cases like these, it seems natural to suggest that utterances of the form 'S knows that *p*' generally pragmatically convey that S can rely on *p* in the kinds of situations relevant in the context of utterance (or something along these lines). But the inclusion of 'in the kinds of situations relevant in the context of utterance' raises the concern that this is no more a universal implication than is Rysiew's proposed implication that S can rule out the salient alternatives to *p*.

Indeed, a more plausible explanation of any discomfort with an utterance of (14) is that it constitutes a violation of something like Grice's (1975) maxim of Manner – the injunction that one 'be perspicuous'. An utterance of (14) is certainly a rather convoluted way of conveying the order of the relevant events. An utterance of something like (17) would be far more straightforward.

(17) They got married and then they fell in love.

There seems no reason to think that an utterance of (8) or (9a) would constitute a violation of the maxim of Manner, especially when issued in response to the question 'Do you know that the bank will be open?' As a result, this explanation cannot be extended to explain the infelicitousness of an uttererance of (8) or (9a).

We conclude that the presence of nearly universal pragmatic implications that are readily cancelled, in addition to a more plausible alternative explanation of the motivating cases, puts significant pressure on the suggestion that the universality of the implication present in the case of knowledge ascriptions explains the infelicity associated with (8) and (9a). For various reasons then, Rysiew's proposal looks unlikely to succeed.

Matt Lutz (2013, §4) proposes that the reason utterances of (8) are uncomfortable is because the information supplied in the first conjunct is irrelevant.[28] Lutz motivates this proposal by appeal to an example similar to one presented in Sect. 3, featuring (3). Recall that in the example presented in Sect. 3, Mary is reviewing applications for an academic post in her department. Mary asks John if a particular applicant, Mr. X, is a good philosopher, and John replies by uttering (3).

[28] Thanks to an anonymous referee for drawing our attention to Lutz's proposal.

(3) His English is excellent and he attends seminars regularly.

In the circumstances, John's utterance pragmatically conveys that Mr. X is not a good philosopher. Lutz suggests that some straightforward attempts to cancel this pragmatic implication, such as (18), are likely to be uncomfortable.

(18) His English is excellent and he attends seminars regularly. He is a good philosopher.

Lutz claims that were John to utter (18) in response to Mary's query, his utterance would seem uncomfortable, and that the reason it would seem uncomfortable is because the information supplied in the first sentence is irrelevant to the conversation at hand. He then proposes that something similar is true as regards utterances of (8). In regard to the Bank Case, the proposal would be that the information that DeRose knows that the bank will be open is irrelevant in HIGH, and that this is why an utterance of (8) by DeRose seems infelicitous.

Here is an initial concern. It is not clear that the irrelevance of the information supplied in the first sentence of (18) is causing much of the discomfort with the envisaged utterance. An utterance of (18) in response to the question 'Is Mr X. a good philosopher?' seems to imply that the fact that Mr. X has an excellent command of English and attends seminars regularly provides evidence that he is a good philosopher. Such an utterance might therefore tend to seem uncomfortable primarily because the implied evidential connection is difficult to make sense of.

This suspicion might seem to be confirmed when we compare (18) to (19).

(19) His English is excellent and he attends seminars regularly. He is also a good philosopher.

The addition of 'also' in (19) serves to remove the implication that there is some evidential connection between English level and seminar attendance, on the one hand, and being a good philosopher, on the other hand. Furthermore, an utterance of (19), while a somewhat unusual thing to say in response to the question 'Is Mr. X a good philosopher?', strikes us as an acceptable cancellation – in obvious contrast to (8). This supplies some initial reason to be sceptical that even supposing the information that DeRose knows the bank will be open is irrelevant in HIGH, that fact would be sufficient to explain the discomfort associated with an utterance of (8).

But there are more pressing problems. First, Lutz's contention that the information that DeRose knows that the bank will be open is irrelevant in HIGH strikes us as unfounded. Lutz suggests the information is irrelevant because DeRose and his wife need to investigate further (despite the fact that DeRose knows that the bank will be open). Lutz then clarifies this remark by saying that the information that DeRose knows is 'doing no work' in (8).[29] However, being told that DeRose knows that the bank will be open supplies DeRose's wife with information that is clearly relevant given the direction of their present conversation (and their present needs). Most obviously, being told that DeRose knows that the bank will be open supplies information regarding how much additional inquiry DeRose and his wife need to engage in before they are able to safely wait until Saturday to go to the bank.

Second, it is worth observing that, in HIGH, DeRose is responding to his wife's question 'Do you know that the bank will be open?'. This contrasts significantly with the example motivating Lutz's proposal – featuring an utterance of (18) – in which mention of English level and seminar attendance enters the conversation entirely 'out of the blue'. Indeed, by uttering (8), DeRose is providing a direct, affirmative response to his wife's question, followed by an apparently simple clarification.

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[29] Lutz (2013) actually makes his comments in regard to a version of Cohen's (1999) so-called 'Aiport Case' with a very similar structure to the Bank Case discussed here.

Of course, just because DeRose utters (8) in response to the question 'Do you know that the bank will be open?' does not mean that the information that he knows must be relevant in HIGH. Presumably, Lutz would propose that the presence of this question fails to render the information that DeRose knows relevant because DeRose's wife is not using her question to ask about knowledge, but to ask about something else. Indeed, given the high stakes, and the consideration of the possibility that the bank has recently changed its hours, it might seem plausible to suggest that the most relevant issue in HIGH is whether DeRose occupies an epistemic position that is stronger than the one required for knowledge (see Sect. 6 for further discussion of this kind of idea). For example, perhaps the most relevant issue in HIGH is whether DeRose occupies a strong enough epistemic position such that he and his wife do not need to engage in further inquiry. Lutz might therefore suggest that we naturally interpret DeRose's wife's question as probing into this issue, and not into the issue of whether DeRose knows that the bank will be open.

The problem for Lutz's account is that in examples of other pragmatic phenomena that appear to exhibit the same kind of structure, there seems no discomfort in first answering the question that is semantically expressed, before immediately clarifying the situation by answering the question that is 'really at issue'. For example, suppose that Mary, a primary school teacher, is decorating her classroom, and needs someone to help her move a display case. Another teacher, John, is sat in the classroom marking some test papers. Mary tells John that she is not strong enough to move the case alone, and asks 'Are you able to help?' John replies by uttering (20).

(20) Yes, I am.

John's response pragmatically conveys that he will help Mary. Furthermore, given the situation, it seems that Mary is really inquiring into whether John will in fact help her, and not whether he has the

ability to do so. This seems analogous to the situation allegedly arising in HIGH – viz. that it is natural to interpret DeRose's wife as really inquiring into whether DeRose occupies a strong enough epistemic position such that he and his wife do not need to engage in further inquiry (or something along these lines), and not whether he has knowledge.[30]

However, in clear contrast to the situation in HIGH, there is no discomfort in John first answering the question semantically expressed, before then answering the question 'really at issue'. For example, an utterance of (21) by John is clearly felicitous.

(21) I'm able to help, but I won't.[31]

We conclude that Lutz's proposal is inadequate.[32]

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[30] The fact that John is able to help is necessary for his actually helping. Does this fact somehow render the example featuring John and Mary importantly disanalogous from the example featuring DeRose and his wife in HIGH? It seems not, since, assuming TCP, DeRose knowing (or at least being in a position to know) that the bank will be open is presumably necessary for his occupying an epistemic position such that he and his wife do not need to inquire further in HIGH.

[31] There are many other cases of pragmatic phenomena, besides the example featuring (20) and (21), that exhibit the relevant kind of structure. The example featuring (6), discussed at the start of Sect. 5, arguably represents one such case. In (6), it might seem plausible that the most relevant issue is whether there is an open garage nearby, and not whether there is some garage nearby. Indeed, it seems that the former is what A is really inquiring about in asking her question 'Is there a garage nearby?'. Nevertheless, as noted at the start of Sect. 5, it seems perfectly felicitous for B to cancel the pragmatic effect supposedly associated with his response in (6), as (7) illustrates.

In reply to this particular case, Lutz (2013) contends that B's utterance of (7) is likely to be uncomfortable if it is stipulated that B is intelligent and trying to be helpful. However, we do not agree with this contention, even with that stipulation in place. Indeed, (7) seems like a natural and appropriate thing to say in the circumstances (even if the information is not very helpful to A). This is in stark contrast to the situation arising in regard to an utterance of (8) by DeRose in HIGH.

[32] Rysiew (2007, p. 639) offers a somewhat similar proposal to Lutz's. In the case of (8), Rysiew's proposal is that the reason an utterance of (8) seems infelicitous is that the speaker is thereby uttering something – viz. 'We know' – that conveys that she occupies a strong enough epistemic position for present purposes (or something along those lines). But Rysiew then asks why a speaker would choose to utter something that conveys that she occupies a strong enough epistemic position for present purposes, only to then deny that she occupies such a position, as the speaker does by adding 'but we need to investigate further'. Why would the speaker not simply deny that she occupies a strong enough epistemic position for present purposes? For instance, she could just say 'We need to investigate further'.

Let us finally consider a slightly different response. The response begins from the observation that utterances of (22a) and (22b) by DeRose in HIGH seem infelicitous.

(22) a. The bank will be open, but we need to investigate further.

b. The bank will be open, but I cannot rule out that the hours have changed.

On the assumption that knowledge is factive – that a knowledge ascription entails or presupposes the truth of its complement clause – the truth of (22a) follows from the truth of (8) and the truth of (22b) follows from the truth of (9a). A natural suggestion is therefore that the infelicity of utterances of (8) and (9a) is rooted in the infelicity of (22a) and (22b).[33]

We shall not explore the details of the explanation of the infelicity of (22a) and (22b) here. To do so would probably require making assumptions about the conditions for appropriate assertion, and we would prefer to avoid making any such assumptions. Fortunately, there are good reasons to think that this line of response is inadequate independently of the details of the explanation of the infelicity of (22a) and (22b).

However, in light of the discussion of Lutz's proposal, there is a fairly straightforward answer to these questions. Assuming TCP, the motivation for DeRose to utter (8) in HIGH is presumably to impart the information that although he knows that the bank will be open, he and his wife nevertheless need to investigate further. As we noted in our discussion of Lutz's proposal, this information seems like something relevant and useful given the direction of the conversation in HIGH, since it indicates not merely that further inquiry is required in order for DeRose and his wife to safely wait until Saturday to go to the bank, but it also indicates how much further inquiry is called for. In fact, it seems that DeRose might be motivated to convey this information simply because he wishes to first answer the question that is semantically expressed by his wife's utterance of 'Do you know that the bank will be open?', before then answering the question that is 'really at issue' in their conversation. In examples of other pragmatic phenomena that exhibit a similar kind of structure, this appears to be something that speakers can comfortably achieve. We conclude that Rysiew's comments fail to supply a reason to expect an utterance of (8) to be uncomfortable. Similar remarks apply to (9a).

[33] For relevant discussion, see e.g. DeRose (2002; 2009) on the so-called 'Generality Objection' and Pritchard (2010).

The inadequacy arises when we turn to certain cases featuring third-person knowledge ascriptions. Suppose that, like DeRose in the Bank Cases, Mary was at the bank two weeks ago on a Saturday, but that she has also recently gone into the bank and confirmed the opening hours. Suppose that DeRose and his wife are in the situation described in HIGH, and that Mary is discussing their situation with her friend, John. Mary and John are aware that DeRose and his wife have a lot at stake. John, unsure about the character of DeRose's evidence, raises the worry that DeRose and his wife will wait until Saturday to deposit their paycheques without knowing that the bank will be open, and that their daughter will get angry with them for jeopardising her college money as a result. John remarks that banks sometimes change their hours, and then asks Mary 'Does Keith know that the bank will be open?'

Suppose that Mary is aware that DeRose's only evidence is that he was at the bank two weeks ago on a Saturday. In that case, it seems that it would be appropriate for Mary to respond by uttering (23) and inappropriate for her to respond by uttering (24).

(23) No, he doesn't know it'll be open.

(24) Yes, he knows it'll be open

What matters for our purposes is that, just like in the case of the pragmatic implication allegedly generated by DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH, Mary cannot cancel the pragmatic implication that would be required to explain our judgment regarding her utterance of (24). For example, an utterance of (25a) or (25b) by Mary would be infelicitous.

(25) a. Keith knows that the bank will be open, but he needs to investigate further.

b. Keith knows that the bank will be open, but he cannot rule out that it has changed its hours.[34]

A parallel invariantist strategy to that pursued in the case of (8) and (9a) would root the infelicity of Mary's utterances of (25a) and (25b) in the infelicity of her utterances of (26a) and (26b).

(26) a. The bank will be open, but Keith needs to investigate further.

b. The bank will be open, but Keith cannot rule out that it has changed its hours.

The problem is that utterances of (26a) and (26b) by Mary would *not* be infelicitous. Indeed, it seems that an utterance of (26a) or (26b) by Mary would be both true and appropriate. This last line of response is therefore insufficiently general.[35]

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[34] Given TCP, an utterance of (25a) by DeRose in HIGH is very plausibly true. Thus, even if the defender of TCP were to express doubts about the inappropriateness of an utterance of (24) by Mary, it still seems that some explanation is required for why an utterance of (25a) seems infelicitous. None seems to be forthcoming.

[35] Dougherty and Rysiew (2009; 2011) offer an explanation for the infelicitousness of utterances of the form 'I know that *p*, but it might be that not-*p*'. They suggest that such utterances typically seem infelicitous, despite often being true, because it is natural to assume that a speaker would only mention the possibility that not-*p* if the epistemic chance (for the speaker) that not-*p* were sufficiently large to be relevant to the conversation. However, Dougherty and Rysiew contend, if that chance were sufficiently large to be relevant to the conversation, it would be large enough to preclude knowledge. Thus, utterances of the form 'I know that *p*, but it might be that not-*p*' tend to seem infelicitous because the utterance of the second conjunct can be relevant only if the utterance of the first conjunct is false.

Could this explanation have application in the current dispute over cancellability? The answer seems to be 'no'. The issue in HIGH seems to be whether DeRose and his wife can safely wait until Saturday to go to the bank – indeed, it seems that DeRose's wife is issuing the question 'Do you know that the bank will be open?' precisely in order to determine whether they can safely wait. But it seems that, given the stakes, the chance (for DeRose) that the bank will not be open is sufficiently large such that he and his wife need to inquire further before they can safely wait until Saturday. The chance that the bank will not be open therefore seems sufficiently large to be relevant to the conversation in HIGH. Nevertheless, it is not large enough to preclude knowledge, since, given TCP, DeRose knows that the bank will be open. It therefore seems that the epistemic chance that the bank will not be open is relevant in HIGH, but it is relevant without being large enough to preclude knowledge (see also Fantl and McGrath's (2009, p. 20-23) objection to Dougherty and Rysiew). Dougherty and Rysiew's account therefore supplies no reason to expect that a cancellation attempt along the lines of 'I know that the bank will be open, but it might not be' by DeRose in HIGH should seem infelicitous. For

5.2 Option 2: The Implication is Cancellable

The second line of response is to argue that the putative pragmatic implications are in fact cancellable. Brown (2006), Lutz (2013), and Rysiew (2001) all suggest that DeRose might be able to cancel the relevant implication by other means than uttering (8) or (9a)-(9c). Let us review their proposals.

Rysiew (2001, p. 495) claims that an utterance of (27) by DeRose in HIGH would be felicitous.[36]

(27) I know that the bank will be open, but of course I cannot rule out the bizarre alternatives to the bank's being open.

Even if we grant that an utterance of (27) would be felicitous, an utterance of (27) can serve to cancel the implication generated by DeRose's utterance of (1) only if what DeRose conveys by his utterance of (1) is that he can rule out the bizarre alternatives to the bank's being open. However, insofar as DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH conveys something about the ruling out of alternatives, it seems to convey that he can rule out that the bank has recently changed its hours. That is hardly a bizarre alternative.

Furthermore, if DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH did convey that he could rule out the bizarre alternatives, then his utterance would presumably seem inappropriate and false if he could not rule those alternatives out. But suppose the bank's manager informed DeRose earlier in the day that the

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similar reasons, it does not seem possible to extend the explanation to account for the infelicitousness of the other cancellation attempts considered at the start of Sect. 5, such as (8) or (9a). Thanks to an anonymous referee for encouraging us to consider this issue.

[36] Rysiew (2001, p. 495) actually makes the more general claim that utterances of the form 'I know that *p*, but I cannot rule out the *bizarre* alternatives to *p*' seem felicitous.

bank would be open on Saturday. DeRose's epistemic position is now such that if he were to utter (1) in HIGH, his utterance would seem appropriate and true. But although improved, his epistemic position is nevertheless such that he cannot rule out the bizarre alternatives to the bank's being open – he still cannot rule out possibilities like the possibility that the bank will quantum tunnel to Alaska. The invariantist must do better.

Brown (2006, p. 428) suggests that utterances of (28a) and (28b) by DeRose in HIGH would be felicitous and would serve to cancel the putative pragmatic implication.[37]

(28) a. I know that the bank will be open, but I am not in a really strong epistemic position with respect to the proposition that the bank will be open.

b. I know that the bank will be open, but my belief that it will be open does not match the facts in a really distant possible world.

The first thing to note about (28a) and (28b) is that they feature technical vocabulary such as 'epistemic position' and 'possible world'. One concern this raises is that, assuming utterances like (28a) or (28b) represent the only way to cancel the pragmatic effect associated with an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH, the only way to talk about what is pragmatically conveyed by an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH is by employing technical vocabulary. While these issues are complicated, it would be at least somewhat surprising if this were the case. After all, ordinary speakers are supposed to be able to work out what is conveyed by an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH.

The second thing to note is that, in addition to featuring technical vocabulary, (28a) and (28b) feature highly context sensitive vocabulary such as 'really distant' and 'really strong'. It is very hard to judge

[37] Brown (2006, p. 428) actually makes the more general claim that utterances of the form 'S knows that *p*, but S is not in a really strong epistemic position with respect to *p*' and 'S knows that *p*, but S's belief that *p* does not match the facts of the matter in a really distant possible world' are felicitous.

what expressions like 'really strong epistemic position' and 'really distant possible world' pick out as uttered by DeRose in HIGH. One should therefore be sceptical that, even supposing utterances of (28a) and (28b) are felicitous, they genuinely serve to cancel the implication generated by DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH.

Indeed, when one tries to specify a particular reading for 'really strong epistemic position' or 'really distant possible world', it seems that the only readings on which utterances of (28a) and (28b) are acceptable are readings on which they do *not* cancel the relevant implication. For example, if 'really strong epistemic position' picks out the kind of epistemic position such that those who occupy it can rule out the possibility in which the bank quantum tunnels to Alaska, then DeRose's utterance of (28a) may seem acceptable. But for reasons given in the discussion of (27), that utterance would not serve to cancel the implication generated by an utterance of (1) in HIGH. To cancel that implication, it seems that 'really strong epistemic position' needs to pick out the kind of epistemic position such that if DeRose occupied it, he would be able to rule out that the bank has changed its hours, or perhaps the kind of epistemic position such that if DeRose occupied it, he would not need to inquire further. But when 'really strong epistemic position' picks out this kind of property, DeRose's utterance of (28a) no longer seems acceptable. As a result, it does not seem that DeRose's utterance of (28a) can be used to cancel the implication generated by DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH. Similar remarks apply to (28b).

Finally, Lutz (2013) suggests that the following utterances are felicitous in HIGH.[38]

(29) a. I know that the bank will be open, but considering the disastrous consequences if we wait and find the bank closed, we'd better double check.

b. I know the bank will be open, but I'm not *certain* so I had better double-check.

[38] Since Lutz (2013) actually focuses his discussion on a version of Cohen's (1999) so-called 'Airport Case', we have adjusted his proposed cancellation attempts to fit the cases under discussion.

Let us grant that (29a) and (29b) are acceptable. Even if that is the case, we are not convinced that (29a) or (29b) cancel the relevant pragmatic implications. Suppose that these utterances do serve to cancel the pragmatic effect associated with an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH. The focus in (29a) and (29b) on 'double-checking' then raises an immediate question. Why would an utterance of (29a) or (29b) serve to cancel the pragmatic effect at issue, but an utterance of (8) by DeRose in HIGH fail to do so? If (29a) or (29b) could be used to cancel the relevant pragmatic implication, it seems that it should also be possible to use (8) to cancel the relevant pragmatic implication. However, it is not possible to use to (8) cancel the relevant implication. This puts pressure on the suggestion that (29a) or (29b) are actually cancelling the relevant implication.

Lutz seems to admit that there is something that requires explanation here. His response to this challenge is to claim that DeRose needs to engage in 'extra effort' in order to assert that he knows that the bank will be open because that information is irrelevant in HIGH. Lutz suggests that an utterance of (29a) or (29b) is felicitous, whereas an utterance of (8) is not, precisely because by uttering (29a) or (29b), but not by uttering (8), DeRose engages in the additional effort necessary to assert the irrelevant information that he knows the bank will be open.

However, as we saw in Sect. 5.1, Lutz's claim that the information that DeRose knows is irrelevant in HIGH seems unfounded. Furthermore, in HIGH, DeRose is responding to his wife's question 'Do you know that the bank will be open?'. As witnessed in Sect. 5.1, in apparently parallel cases that have this kind of feature, it seems that additional effort is not required in order to felicitously cancel the implication at issue. For example, in the classroom scenario described in Sect. 5.1, an utterance of (20) in response to the question 'Are you able to help?' pragmatically conveys that the speaker will help. But little effort is required to cancel this pragmatic implication. As we pointed out, cancellation can be achieved merely by uttering (21).

These considerations cast significant doubt on Lutz's proposed explanation for why, on the assumption that an utterance of (29a) or (29b) is able cancel the pragmatic effect at issue, an utterance of (8) is unable to do so. But it is far from clear what other explanation is available.[39,40] The upshot is that while Lutz's proposal avoids some of the problems that we have seen with other proposals, we are not convinced that (29a) or (29b) actually serve to cancel the relevant pragmatic implications.

For various reasons then, we are suspicious that any of the proposals of Brown, Rysiew, and Lutz genuinely serve to cancel the pragmatic effect associated with an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH.[41] But it is worth stressing that even supposing the some of the proposed cancellation attempts we have discussed in this section – or some other cancellation attempts not considered here – are both

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[39] It might be proposed – as we considered in Sect. 5.1 – that the infelicity of (8) is somehow tied to the constraints on appropriate assertion. However, as we pointed out, this kind of explanation cannot be extended to various third-person cases.

[40] One might think that there is no special burden on the defender of TCP to explain the difference between (8) and (29a) and (29b). However, it is worth noting that contextualists about knowledge ascriptions seem able to explain the difference between (8) and (29a) and (29b) as uttered by DeRose in HIGH. Assuming standard forms of contextualism about 'knows', and given the circumstances in HIGH, it seems plausible that there would be strong pressure towards interpreting a use of 'knows' by DeRose in response to his wife's question 'Do you know that the bank will be open tomorrow?' as one such that if an utterance of 'I know the bank'll be open' by DeRose is true then he does not need to inquire further into the bank's opening hours. Perhaps the contrast between (8) and (29a)-(29b) is explained by appeal to the fact that extra effort is required to overcome the pressure to interpret the use of 'knows' in this way. There is no obvious way for a non-contextualist to provide an explanation along these lines.

[41] Drawing on a suggestion in Brown (2008), an anonymous referee proposed to us that an utterance of 'I know, but I need to make sure' might cancel the pragmatic effect associated with DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH. In response, let us make two points. First, insofar as an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH conveys something about his need to 'make sure', it seems to convey that DeRose does not need to do more to make sure that the bank will be open. However, notice that when the proposed cancellation attempt is clarified to make clear that this is what is being denied, it no longer seems felicitous. For example, an utterance by DeRose in HIGH of 'I know the bank'll be open, but I need to make sure it will be' seems infelicitous. This might seem to suggest that an utterance of 'I know, but I need to make sure', although felicitous, is not cancelling the pragmatic effect associated with an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH. Second, the same kind of problem that affects Lutz's proposal will also affect this proposal. In particular, it seems that the pragmatic defender of TCP will have to come up with some explanation for why 'I know but I need to make sure' can cancel the pragmatic effect associated with knowledge ascriptions, while utterances of (8) cannot. But no such explanation seems to be forthcoming.

felicitous and candidates for cancelling the alleged pragmatic implication, that is not sufficient to dismiss a related and general objection to the pragmatic defence of TCP that arises out of the possible cancellation attempts we considered at the start of Sect. 5. In regard to certain of the utterances considered at the start of Sect. 5, it might seem reasonable to suggest that they are infelicitous because they semantically express contradictions. But in regard to others, particularly (8) and (9b), this suggestion seems highly implausible. For example, consider an utterance of (8) by DeRose in HIGH. It seems to be a feature of HIGH that, given DeRose's current epistemic and practical situation, further inquiry is required in order for he and his wife to safely wait until Saturday to go to the bank. But defenders of TCP are presumably not going to deny that DeRose knows that the bank will be open. It therefore seems that, given TCP, an utterance of (8) by DeRose in HIGH is true (Hawthorne 2004, p. 148-9). Similar remarks apply to (9b). This suggests that even if the advocate of a pragmatic defence of TCP can come up with a way of cancelling the alleged pragmatic implication that is felicitous, there remains the problem that utterances of (8) and (9b) seem infelicitous despite being true. How is the advocate of TCP to explain this fact? It seems to us that the best options available for those sympathetic to the pragmatic defence of TCP are the proposals considered in Sect. 5.1. But as we have seen, those proposals either fail or are too limited in scope.

Contrary to recent claims, it seems that defenders of TCP still have work to do when it comes to addressing the cancellability objection. Furthermore, even if some way is found to cancel the pragmatic effect associated with knowledge ascriptions, this is not sufficient to diffuse a closely related problem concerning the felicitousness of utterances of (8) and (9b). We cannot rule out that future research will reveal other possible lines of response. However, based on our discussion of the proposals that we have come across, we conclude that cancellability and related issues remain a serious problem that any pragmatic defence of TCP must confront in one way or another.

6 Relevance

So far we have discussed general problems that any pragmatic defence of TCP must confront. In this section we will look at a more specific pragmatic proposal, defended by Brown (2005; 2006), Hazlett (2009), and Rysiew (2001; 2007), that is based on considerations involving relevance. Although this proposal has played a prominent role in the literature, we will argue that the proposal fails to provide a satisfactory explanation of why an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH would seem inappropriate and false. It is important to note that the scope of the arguments presented here will be more limited than the scope of the arguments in previous sections. Our goal in this section is only to attack one prominent pragmatic account, not to suggest that no pragmatic account can be successful.

DeRose (1999; 2002; 2009) proposes that any plausible pragmatic explanation of our Bank Case judgments must invoke only *general* rules governing conversation.[42] Brown, Hazlett, and Rysiew promise to meet this constraint by arguing that it is Grice's (1975) maxim of Relation – the conversational rule that one should make one's conversational contributions relevant – that lies at the heart of our Bank Case judgments.[43,44] In virtue of the operation of this general conversational rule,

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[42] This is one of three constraints that DeRose (1999, §10-11) proposes on pragmatic explanation. In Sect. 3, we encountered one of the other two constraints, viz. that an appearance of truth and appropriateness cannot be explained by appeal to the claim that a false utterance pragmatically conveys a truth. As we saw, cases like those involving utterances of (4) raise potential problems for that kind of constraint. For critical discussion of DeRose's remaining constraint, see Brown (2006, p. 411-3).

[43] The view is defended in Brown (2005; 2006), Hazlett (2009), and Rysiew (2001; 2007). Rysiew (2001; 2007) actually proposes an alternative explanation of those examples, like the Bank Cases, which feature first person knowledge ascriptions, reserving a relevance-based explanation for examples featuring third person knowledge ascriptions. In essence, his alternative explanation is that when one asserts *p* one already conveys that one knows *p,* and so when one asserts that one knows *p*, one ends up conveying something more – viz. that one can rule out the possibilities salient in the conversation (or something along those lines). However, this explanation cannot, as Rysiew acknowledges, be extended to third person cases. It is also thrown into doubt by DeRose's (2002) observation that assertions of *p* already seem to convey that the speaker can rule out the possibilities salient in the conversation (or something along those lines). We therefore set the explanation aside.

[44] It does not matter whether the proposal is presented in terms of Grice's (1975) original conversational maxims or in terms of a different set of conversational rules. Thus, while we are going to present the issues using Grice's familiar machinery, it would not make a difference if we were to

they suggest that knowledge ascriptions and denials pragmatically convey various things about the epistemic position of the subject beyond the fact that she knows or does not know the proposition at issue.

One can implement the proposal with various characterisations of epistemic position, but we are going to follow Rysiew (2001) in characterising strength of epistemic position in terms of the range of alternatives or counterpossibilities that the subject can rule out. Let us call the set of alternatives a subject must rule out in order to know some proposition *p* 'the knowledge alternatives' to *p*.[45] On the kind of non-sceptical invariantism we are considering, the set of knowledge alternatives to *p* does not vary with conversational context and is such that a moderate amount of evidence for *p* (like that possessed by DeRose in the Bank Cases) is sufficient to rule all of them out.

The proposed explanation then runs as follows. Given TCP, DeRose knows that the bank will be open on Saturday. He can therefore rule out the knowledge alternatives to that proposition. Nevertheless, given his evidence, he cannot rule out more distant alternatives, such as the possibility that the bank has changed its hours in the past two weeks. Now consider HIGH. Given both the recent raising of the possibility that the bank has changed its hours and the pressing financial obligation of the protagonists, the relevant issue in HIGH is plausibly whether or not DeRose can rule out that the bank has changed its hours. Indeed, this – or something like it – is what DeRose's wife is *really* seeking to establish in asking DeRose whether or not he knows the bank will be open. Thus, on the assumption that DeRose is being relevant, if DeRose were to utter (1) in HIGH, he would convey that he can rule out that the bank has changed its hours – something that is false. Conversely, his utterance of (2) in HIGH will convey that he cannot rule out that the bank has changed its hours – something that is true.

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couch the discussion in terms of, for example, a so-called 'neo-Gricean' framework. For discussion of such frameworks, see e.g. Horn (1984; 1989) and Levinson (2000).

[45] We are using the term 'knowledge alternatives' rather than the more familiar 'relevant alternatives' associated with the relevant alternatives theory of knowledge. This is to avoid confusion with the notion of conversational relevance.

While this might look like a promising account of how utterances of (1) and (2) in HIGH generate the pragmatic implications they are alleged to, we will argue that the proffered explanation is not satisfactory. In a nutshell, our concern is that considerations having to do with relevance are insufficient to explain why an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH would convey that he could rule out the possibility that the bank has changed its hours.[46]

(1) I know it'll be open.

We are told that what is relevant in HIGH is whether or not DeRose is in a strong enough epistemic position to rule out possibilities like the bank having changed its hours. But if what is relevant in a conversation is whether or not *p* is the case, then a contribution that conveys that *p* is the case and a contribution that conveys that *p* is not the case are presumably equally relevant. So why do we take DeRose's utterance of (1) to convey that he is able to rule out the possibility that the bank has changed its hours rather than that he is *not* able to? In either case, his contribution would count as relevant.[47] As it stands, then, the explanation appears to be incomplete. More is needed to explain why DeRose conveys that he is in the stronger epistemic position.[48]

It is important to observe that the objection we are pressing does not rest on the doubtless rather simple-minded characterisation of the relevant issue in HIGH that we have been invoking. For example,

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[46] We are not alone in worrying that the relevance-based explanation of DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH is inadequate. McGrath (2013) also expresses some concerns with the explanation. See e.g. also DeRose (2009, p. 121-3) for an objection to the relevance-based explanation of the apparent truth of (2) as uttered by DeRose in HIGH. For considerations of space, we will not discuss that objection here. In this section we are going to focus exclusively on DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH.

[47] It also seems that DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH would convey useful information both if it conveyed that he knows that the bank will be open and can rule out that the bank has changed its hours, and if it conveyed that he knows that the bank will be open but cannot rule out that possibility.

[48] There are some similarities between the objection that we are pressing here and the so-called 'symmetry problem', familiar from the literature on scalar implicature. See e.g. von Fintel and Heim's unpublished MIT lecture notes 'Pragmatics in Linguistic Theory'.

it might be proposed that the relevant issue in HIGH is really whether DeRose can rule out what Rysiew (2001, p. 488) calls 'the salient alternatives'. The salient alternatives are the alternatives that the relevant parties 'have in mind'.[49] On this proposal, our judgment that an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH seems inappropriate and false is presumably going to be explained by appeal to the claim that this utterance, although true, conveys the falsehood that DeRose can rule out the salient alternatives. It is false that DeRose can rule out the salient alternatives in HIGH, despite his knowing that the bank will be open, on the assumption that there are some alternatives that are not knowledge alternatives, that the relevant parties 'have in mind' in HIGH, and that are such that DeRose cannot rule them out.

But consider again an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH. There are two options for what that utterance might convey. The first option is that it conveys that DeRose can rule out all the salient alternatives. The second option is that it conveys that DeRose cannot rule out all the salient alternatives. As noted above, if the relevant issue in a conversation is whether *p* is the case, a contribution that conveys that *p* is the case and a contribution that conveys that *p* is not the case are presumably equally relevant. On the proposal under consideration, the relevant issue in HIGH is whether DeRose can rule out the salient alternatives to the bank's being open. It therefore seems that, in HIGH, a contribution that conveys that DeRose can rule out the salient alternatives would be just as relevant as a contribution that conveys that he cannot rule out the salient alternatives. The question is then why DeRose's utterance of (1) would convey that he can rule out the salient alternatives rather than that he cannot rule out the salient alternatives. It seems that more than a straightforward appeal to relevance is needed to explain why his utterance would convey the former rather than the latter.

In what follows, we will continue to talk as though the relevant issue in HIGH is whether DeRose can rule out that the bank has changed its hours. But it is important to note that nothing that we say turns

[49] For the purpose of the present discussion we are going to assume that the knowledge alternatives are a subset of the salient alternatives. However, this is only a simplifying assumption and we could just as easily talk about the union of the knowledge alternatives and the salient alternatives.

on our choice of the more simple-minded characterisation – it merely helps keep the discussion more manageable.

One response to these concerns is to appeal to the fact that, in HIGH, DeRose is responding to his wife's question 'Do you know that the bank will be open tomorrow?'. Recall that it was suggested that in asking that question, DeRose's wife is really asking the question whether or not DeRose can rule out the possibility that the bank has recently changed its hours. By uttering (1) in HIGH, DeRose would be giving a direct and affirmative answer to his wife's explicit question. It seems reasonable to suppose that he would therefore also convey an affirmative answer to her implicit question – viz. that he can rule out the possibility that the bank has changed its hours.

The chief problem with this response is that it is insufficiently general. Even if we modify the example such that DeRose's wife no longer asks an explicit question, an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH still seems inappropriate and false. For instance, Stanley's (2005) presentation of the Bank Cases does not feature such a question, but that does not seem to alter our judgments.[50]

An alternative response is to fall back on putative similarities with other cases. If the invariantist can provide examples of other relevance-based pragmatic effects that exhibit analogous features to the case at hand, that might go some way toward alleviating our concerns.

It is not feasible to review every potentially analogous case, so we are just going to focus on the example that Brown (2006) uses as a model in presenting her account of the pragmatic implication generated by DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH. Our discussion will hopefully serve to illustrate the more general pitfalls and limitations with this kind of response.

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[50] There is also the issue of accounting for what happens when DeRose's wife asks her question in HIGH. The invariantist will presumably have to come up with some pragmatic account of how she is able to convey what she does by asking her question. This is not something that can be taken for granted.

(6) A: I've run out of gas. Is there a garage nearby?

B: There's one around the corner.

As remarked in Sect. 5, B's response seems to convey that the garage is open. Following Grice (1975), Brown takes B's response to be true just in case there is a garage (open or not) around the corner, but to pragmatically convey that the garage is open. On this picture, B's response might seem to be just like an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH. That utterance was said to be true just in case DeRose knows that the bank will be open, but to pragmatically convey that he can rule out that the bank has changed its hours. And Brown proposes a parallel, relevance-based explanation of (6). It seems that the relevant issue in the conversation in (6) is really whether or not there is an *open* garage nearby. This is what A is plausibly seeking to establish when she asks her question in (6). Thus, if A assumes that B is being relevant, she will take her utterance to convey that the garage is open.

There are two immediate problems with trying to address our concerns by appeal to (6). First, it is not clear that the best treatment of (6) is pragmatic rather than semantic in character. If B's response were true just in case there was an *open* garage around the corner, then it obviously would not make much sense, from the perspective of an invariantist about 'knows', to compare an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH with what is going on in (6).[51] Second, the relevance-based explanation Brown offers of (6) suffers from exactly the same kind of defect as the explanation offered in the case of DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH – namely, that not enough has been said to account for why B's response conveys that the garage is open rather than that it is not.

[51] The most obvious way to develop a semantic treatment of (6) would be to make use of the resources that have been developed in order to provide a semantic treatment of quantifier domain restriction. The idea would be that the relevant quantifier is restricted in such a way that B's response is true just in case there is an open garage around the corner. See e.g. Stanley and Szabó (2000) for further details and relevant discussion.

But let's set these problems aside, and assume that a suitably enhanced relevance-based pragmatic story is the right account of (6). That should still not dispel our worries with regard to the proposed explanation of DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH. The reason is that the kind of considerations that complete the relevance-based explanation in the case of (6) may well lack appropriate analogues in the case of DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH. An initial ground for such concern is that it is not clear just what considerations *would* serve to complete the relevance-based explanation of (6), let alone whether they have appropriate analogues in the Bank Case.

More pressingly, there are various ways of trying to complete the explanation of what is going on in the case of (6) that cannot be extended to DeRose's utterance of (1) in HIGH. For example, one might argue that background 'real world' knowledge plays an important role in cases like (6).[52] Perhaps it is part of the background knowledge of the conversational participants in (6) that if there is a garage nearby, it is likely to be open. That could play an important role in explaining why B's reply conveys that the garage is open. But note that it does not seem natural to assume that it is part of the background knowledge of the conversational participants in HIGH that if DeRose knows that the bank will be open on Saturday, then he is likely to meet the kind of very stringent epistemic standards in play in that context. After all, speakers who meet the fairly modest epistemic standards required – given TCP – for knowledge that their bank will be open on Saturday will not typically be able to rule out relatively distant possibilities, like the possibility that their bank has changed its hours in the past two weeks.

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[52] Gauker (2001) proposes an account of examples like (6) which puts a lot of emphasis on real world knowledge. It needs to be acknowledged that Gauker is engaged in the more ambitious project of attempting to provide an alternative to a more traditional implicature-based account of (6). However, while we do not wish to endorse such a view here, we are open to the possibility that real world knowledge could have an important role to play when it comes to making sense of examples like (6). A view that puts a lot of weight on real world knowledge would seem to predict that B's response would not convey that the garage is open if, for instance, the conversation takes place late at night in a region in which it's common knowledge that garages are unlikely to be open at that time (though it may well convey that, for all B knows, it is open). For what it is worth, we do not take this prediction to be obviously incorrect, but we do not wish to take a stand on the issue here.

Another option is to appeal to the practical situation of the conversational participants.[53] What A needs is an open garage that sells gas. If B's reply in (6) conveyed that there is a garage around the corner but that it is closed, his reply would (arguably) not be supplying information that is useful to A. In contrast, it seems that if B's reply conveyed that there is a garage around the corner and it is open, his reply would be supplying information that is useful to A. This is something else that could play a role in explaining why B's reply conveys that the garage is open, rather than that it is closed. But we are again not convinced that a similar proposal has application in the Bank Case. In HIGH, DeRose and his wife are trying to determine whether they need to deposit their paycheques right away or whether they can wait until Saturday. In light of this, it seems that DeRose's utterance of (1) would supply useful information either if it conveyed that DeRose could rule out the possibility that the bank has changed its hours or if it conveyed that he could not rule out that possibility. If it conveys the former information, that would indicate that DeRose and his wife can wait until Saturday to go to the bank. If it conveys the latter information, that would indicate that they need to deposit their paycheques right away or seek further confirmation of the bank's opening hours. Either way, the information seems to be useful.

Clearly much more could be said. The important point is simply that, even assuming cases like (6) warrant a relevance-based pragmatic explanation, it is far from clear that this will be of assistance in accounting for why an utterance of (1) by DeRose conveys that he can, rather than that he cannot, rule out that the bank has changed its hours.

Finally, we want to stress that proponents of a relevance-based account cannot just assume that there must be some way of filling out the explanation regarding an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH. Even if it is granted that there are cases, like (6), that fit the pattern that is supposed to be exhibited by

[53] Thanks to an anonymous referee for making a suggestion along these lines.

DeRose's utterance of (1), there are also cases that fit the opposing pattern. For instance, consider the difference between (1) and (30a)-(30c).

(30) a. I believe that the bank will be open.

b. I have good reason to think that the bank will be open.

c. It was open until noon on Saturday two weeks ago.

If DeRose were to utter any of (30a)-(30c) in HIGH, he would not thereby convey that he can rule out the possibility that the bank has recently changed its hours. If anything, it seems that he would convey that he can not rule out that possibility. It seems plausible that the relevant issue in HIGH is the same whether DeRose utters (1) or whether he utters (30a)-(30c). So what accounts for the contrast between utterances of (30a)-(30c) and utterances of (1)?

While we suspect that this temptation should be resisted, one might even be tempted to argue there should be *no* contrast between (1) and (30a)-(30c) as uttered by DeRose in HIGH. Given TCP, the truth of an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH, just like the truth of an utterance of any of (30a)-(30c), does not entail that DeRose can rule out that the bank has changed its hours. However, DeRose could presumably utter something in HIGH the truth of which *would* entail that he can rule that possibility out. This raises an important question. If DeRose were able to make the stronger and more informative claim about his epistemic position – that is, a claim that entails that he can rule out that the bank has changed its hours, rather than one which does not – why wouldn't he? Assuming Grice's (1975) maxim of Quantity – the conversational rule that one should make one's contribution as informative as required –, these considerations might seem to suggest that were DeRose to utter (1) in HIGH, or any of (30a)-(30c), he would convey that he cannot rule out that the bank has changed its hours.

If this argument goes through, it is obviously *very* bad news for the proponent of the pragmatic defence of TCP. But the ultimate success of the argument depends on some rather subtle issues involving the pragmatic mechanisms at work.[54] To avoid making controversial assumptions about those pragmatic mechanisms, we are content simply to draw attention to the fact that there are similar cases – those involving utterances of (30a)-(30c) – in which DeRose conveys, if anything, that he cannot rule out that the bank has changed its hours. This fact alone puts pressure on proponents of the relevance-based account to explain why a different pragmatic effect would be associated with an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH. Once again, it cannot simply be taken for granted that an utterance of (1) by DeRose in HIGH would convey that he can not rule out that the bank has changed its hours.

We conclude that there exists a serious challenge to the kind of relevance-based pragmatic account defended by Brown, Hazlett, and Rysiew. Although this kind of account has played a prominent role in the literature, the proposed explanation of what is going on when DeRose utters (1) in HIGH is incomplete, and it is far from obvious that there is a satisfactory way to complete that explanation. In fairness to those sympathetic to a pragmatic defence of TCP, let us nevertheless emphasise again that even if the kind of relevance-based pragmatic considered in this section fails, that does not show that some other pragmatic defence of TCP could not succeed.

7 Closing Remarks

We have argued that pragmatic defences of TCP face a number of serious problems. Any conservative pragmatic proposal is faced with objections based around our judgments about retraction, and despite

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[54] See e.g. Gazdar (1979) and Levinson (1983) for relevant discussion of so-called 'clausal implicatures'. An example of a clausal implicature is the implicature generated by an utterance of (30a) to the effect that the speaker does not know that the bank will be open. Gazdar and Levinson give more detailed criteria for the derivation of this kind of implicature. Among the factors they mention as being relevant to the derivation of the implicature is whether the verb in question is factive, in the sense that the truth of its complement is entailed or presupposed. This might be a reason for distinguishing utterances involving 'knows', like (1), from utterances involving 'believes', like (30a). It is complications like this that make us wary about taking on commitments regarding the pragmatic mechanisms at work.

recent claims to the contrary, is also faced with problems concerning cancellability. As we have seen, these problems become particularly striking when we compare the cases involving knowledge ascriptions with other cases for which a pragmatic treatment has been proposed. And they remain striking even if we allow ourselves to go beyond comparisons with more or less standard cases of pragmatic phenomena and look at more controversial cases. Alongside these general concerns, there are also some more specific concerns associated with the popular relevance-based proposals of Brown (2005; 2006), Hazlett (2009), and Rysiew (2001; 2007).

In our view, the combined weight of these objections raises serious doubts about the viability of defending TCP by appeal to pragmatics. However, we have not attempted to argue for an alternative view, or to compare the view we have been criticising with the various alternatives. That is chiefly work for another occasion. But let us quickly identify some of the main options. One option is to give up TCP and adopt some form of anti-intellectualism or contextualism, perhaps even some form of relativism. But an interesting alternative is to try and defend TCP in ways that do not inherit the difficulties we have identified with the pragmatic account. For example, Jennifer Nagel (2010a; 2010b) and Timothy Williamson (2005a; 2005b) have argued that those sympathetic to a conservative form of invariantism can explain the relevant judgments by appeal to various psychological effects. For all that we have said, this remains an open possibility.

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