Believing p, discovering ¬p: *meğer* and epistemic shifts
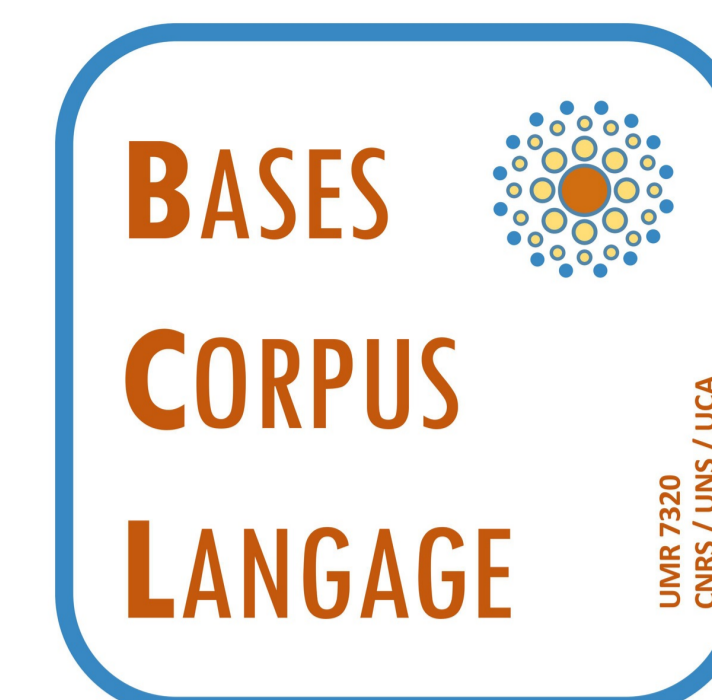
Furkan Dikmen

Université Côte d'Azur, CNRS, BCL, France

furkan.dikmen@etu.univ-cotedazur.fr

1 Background

PAST BELIEFS

(1) a. I believed that Aramis was in France.
b. ... and he was in {France, Italy}.

- The discourse marker, *meğer*, in Turkish, simultaneously marks the past and current belief state of the speaker. In (2), I provide an example of its use.

(2) Ben Aramis Fransa-da san-mış-tı-m.
1.SG Aramis France-LOC think-ANT-PST-1SG
Meğer İtalya-da-y-mış.
meğer Italy-LOC-COP-EVID
'I thought that Aramis was In France. Meğer he was/is in Italy.'

DEFINEDNESS CONDITIONS

- the speaker believed that possibly Aramis was not in Italy.
- the speaker currently believes that Aramis is in Italy.

ASSERTION

- Aramis is/was in Italy.

2 *Meğer* with declaratives

FELICITY CONDITIONS

- *The speaker believed that the prejacent of meğer was* **false.**

(3) Ben Aramis Fransa-da san-mış-tı-m.
1.SG Aramis France-LOC think-EVID-PST-1SG
(*__Meğer__) Fransa-da-y-mış.
Meğer France-LOC-COP-EVID
'I thought that Aramis was In France.
Meğer he was/is in France.'

(4) Context: Since he first went to Italy, Athos has known that Aramis has been in Italy.
Athos: Dün Aramis-le konuş-tu-m.
yesterday Aramis-COM talk-PST-1SG
#**Meğer** İtalya-da-y-mış.
meğer Italy-LOC-COP-EVID
'I talked with Aramis yesterday. *Meğer* he is/was in Italy.'

- *The speaker believed that the prejacent of meğer was possibly* **false.**

(5) Aramis-in İtalya-da ol-ma-ma-sı
Aramis-GEN Italy-LOC be-NMZ-NEG-POSS
muhtemel diye düşün-müş-tü-m. **Meğer**
possible C think-ANT-PST-1.SG meğer
İtalya-da-y-mış.
Italy-LOC-COP-EVID
'I had thought it possible that Aramis would not be in Italy. *Meğer* he is/was.'

References

- Erguvanlı-Taylan, E. 2000. *Semi-grammaticalized Modality in Turkish*, Studies on Turkish and Turkic Languages, Proceedings 46: 133-142
- Hamblin, C. L. 1973. Questions in Montague English. *Foundations of Language* 10(1): 41-53
- Heim, I. 1991. Artikel und definitheit. *Temantik: ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung* 5(6): 487–535
- Zanuttini, R. & Portner, P. (2003). Exclamative Clauses: At the Syntax-Semantics Interface. *Language*

3 *Meğer* with questions

FELICITY CONDITIONS

- *The speaker believes a particular answer to be true.*

- They are on a par with exclamatives (Zanuttini & Portner 2003).

(6) a. Ben Aramis burada san-ıyor-du-m.
1.SG Aramis here think-IMPERF-PST-1.SG
Meğer nereye git-miş?
meğer where go- EVID
'I believed that Aramis was here. Meğer where did he go?' (✅ in (9b), in ❌ (9c))
b. Context: {When Athos went to the apartment of Aramis, he did not find him there} and called him. Aramis told him that he was in Italy.
c. Context: {...} and called a friend of his to ask his whereabouts.

(7) a. Ben Aramis Fransa-da san-ıyor-du-m.
1.SG Aramis France-LOC think-IMPERF-PST-1SG
Meğer İtalya-da mı-y-mış?
meğer Italy-LOC. Q-COP-EVID
'I thought that Aramis was In France. **Meğer** was/is he in Italy?' (✅ in (10b), in ❌ (10c))
b. Context: As they checked the live broadcast of Aramis online, Athos and Porthos saw that Aramis was in Italy.
c. Context: Athos heard that Aramis went abroad, but he is not sure. He asked someone whether he went abroad.

4 Proposal

FORMAL ASSUMPTIONS

- *Meğer* introduces the definedness condition that speaker believed that the prejacent was possibly false, and she currently believes that it is true.

(8) For any quadruple $\langle w_c, t_c, s_c, g_c \rangle$,
$[\![\text{meğer}]\!]^{\langle w_c, t_c, s_c, g_c \rangle} = \lambda P_{\langle st,t \rangle}: \exists t'\ [t' < t_c \land C(t') = 1] \land \exists!q[P(q) = 1 \land DOX_{w_c,t',s^c}(q) = 0 \land DOX_{w_c,t_c,s^c}(q) = 1]$. $\iota q[P(q) = 1 \land DOX_{w_c,t',s^c}(q) = 0 \land DOX_{w_c,t_c,s^c}(q) = 1]$

(9) Let DOX be a function from $D_{\langle s,t \rangle} \rightarrow \{1, 0\}$, for any world w, interval t, individual x and proposition p, $DOX_{w,t,x}(p) = 1$ iff $\forall w'\ [w'$ is compatible with what x believes at t in w, $p(w') = 1]$

Declarative sentences as Hamblin sets (Hamblin 1973)

(10) $[\![\text{Aramis was abroad}]\!] = \lambda p_{\langle s,t \rangle}.\ p = \lambda w.$ Aramis was abroad in w

(11) $[\![\text{meğer + Aramis was abroad}]\!]^{\langle w_c, t_c, s_c, g_c \rangle}$ is defined **only if** $\exists t'\ [t' < t_c \land C(t') = 1] \land \exists!q\ [q = \lambda w.$ Aramis was abroad in w] $\land DOX_{w_c,t',s^c}(q) = 0 \land DOX_{w_c,t_c,s^c}(q) = 1$

if defined $[\![\text{meğer + Aramis was abroad}]\!]^{\langle w_c, t_c, s_c, g_c \rangle} = \iota q\ [q = \lambda w.$ Aramis was abroad in w $\land DOX_{w_c,t',s^c}(q) = 0 \land DOX_{w_c,t_c,s^c}(q) = 1]$

- **Presupposition:** There is a contextually salient time prior to the speech time and a unique proposition that Aramis was abroad which the speaker believed to be possibly false at that past time and which she currently believes to be true.
- **Assertion:** that proposition that Aramis was abroad.

5 Proposal Extended

QUESTIONS

(12) For any quadruple $\langle w_c, t_c, s_c, g_c \rangle$,
$[\![\text{meğer where did Aramis go}]\!]^{\langle w_c, t_c, s_c, g_c \rangle}$ is defined **only if** $\exists t'[t' < t_c \land C(t') = 1] \land \exists!q\ [\exists x : place(x) \land q = \lambda w.$ Aramis went to x in w] $\land \exists w'[w'$ is compatible with what s_c believed at t' in w $\land$ Aramis did not go to x in w'] $\land \forall w''[w''$ is compatible with what s_c believes at t in w, Aramis went to x in w'']

if defined $[\![\text{meğer where did Aramis go}]\!]^{\langle w_c, t_c, s_c, g_c \rangle}$ = $\iota q[\exists x : place(x) \land q = \lambda w.$Aramis went to x in w $\land \exists w'[w'$ is compatible with what s_c believed at t' in w' $\land$ Aramis did not go to x in w'] $\land \forall w''[w''$ is compatible with what s_c believes at t in w, Aramis went to x in w'']]

- **Presupposition:** There is a contextually salient past time before t_c when the speaker believed that Aramis might not have gone to a place x, and currently, she believes that Aramis did.

- **Assertion:** that proposition that Aramis went to that place x.

6 Conclusion

- The formalism accounts for: **i.** The requirement that the prejacent was believed to be possibly false. **ii.** the non-information seeking nature of *meğer* with interrogative prejacents.
- It predicts the infelicity of NPIs in the question prejacents of *meğer* .

(13) a. #Kimse gel-miş.
anyone come-EVID
Int: 'Someone came.'
b. (#**Meğer**) kimse gel-miş mi?
meğer anyone come-EVID Q
'(#Meğer) did anyone came?'

A NOTE ON EVIDENTIAL MARKING:
- *-mIş* is obligatory in *meğer* constructions (Erguvanlı-Taylan 2000).

(14) Aramis-in İtalya-da ol-duğ-un-u
Aramis-Q Italy-LOC be-NOM-POSS-ACC
bil-iyor-du-m. **Aslında** tüm yaz
know-IMPERF-PST-1.SG indeed all summer
orada-y-dı.
there-COP-PST
'I knew that Aramis was in Italy. Indeed, he was there all summer.'

(15) Aramis İtalya-da diye bil-iyor-du-m.
Aramis Italy-LOC COMP know-IMPERF-PST-1.SG
Aslında tüm yaz Fransa-da-y*(-mış)/*-dı.
in.fact all summer France-LOC-COP-EVID/PST
'I thought that Aramis was in Italy. (Apparently) he was in France.'

- **Heim's Maximize Presupposition! (Heim 1991)**