

## Unifying two kinds of discourse effects of the particle *ugye* in Hungarian

**Abstract.** The paper attempts to develop a unified approach to the conventional discourse effects of the Hungarian particle *ugye* as it occurs in assertions and question acts and presents a formal, dynamic semantic analysis of its contribution.

**1. Introduction.** In contemporary Hungarian, the particle *ugye* can make two, apparently unrelated types of contributions to the meaning of sentences, discussed in Gyuris (2009). First, whenever it bears a rise-fall pitch (L\*HL%), it has a function analogous to that of tags in other languages: it is added to an ordinary declarative, and marks the relevant question as biased (cf. Ladd 1981; Asher and Reese 2007; Reese 2007; Krifka 2017; Malamud and Stephenson 2015; Farkas and Roelofsen, advance access). Examples with final and non-final *ugye* with prosodic marking (to be referred to as *ugye*/\ ) are shown in (1)-(2):

- (1) *Egy szép, kerek történetben reménykedik, ugye?*  
one beautiful round story.in hope.3sg ugye  
'You are hoping for a beautiful, round story, aren't you?' (Hung. Nat. Corpus)
- (2) *Befejezed ugye az egyetemet?*  
finish.2sg ugye the university.acc  
'You are going to finish university, aren't you?' (Hung. Nat. Corpus)

*Ugye* is the result of composing the demonstrative adverb *úgy* 'so' with the interrogative particle *-e*.

Second, *ugye*, without specific prosodic marking, referred to as *ugye*\, can appear in declaratives:

- (3) *És függöny nélkül ugye nem lehet.*  
and curtain without ugye not possible  
'It is not possible without a curtain, as we know.' (Hung. Nat. Corpus)

In the latter context, the interpretation of *ugye*\ is analogous to that of particles that mark the propositional content as part of the CG according to the speaker, such as German *ja* (Zimmermann 2011).

**2. Historical development.** We propose that the second interpretation of *ugye*\, attested first in the 20th century, came about as a result of a five-stage development. First, *ugye* started out as a final tag, with a transparent morphology. In the second stage, *ugye* lost its morphological transparency, and the fact that it was used to express a question was indicated by the fall-rise melody, characteristic of ordinary polar interrogatives. In the third stage, *ugye*/\ became an internalized (i.e., non-final) tag. We assume that in all these forms, the declarative introduces the *contextual presupposition* (Davis 2009) or as a *use-condition* (Gutzmann 2015) that the speaker is committed to its propositional content  $\phi$ , and the tag serves the purpose of marking the speech act as a question (cf. Krifka 2017: 388). In the fourth stage, *ugye*/\ underwent semantic reanalysis, which enabled the particle to acquire a lexical meaning independently of its intonation, which enabled it to appear in ordinary declaratives in stage five. Thus, in stage four, the sentence minus *ugye* remained responsible for encoding the propositional content  $\phi$ , the rise-fall intonation for marking the speech act as a question, and *ugye* contributed a condition on input contexts, according to which speaker is committed to  $\phi$ . In the fifth stage, illustrated in (3), where the prosodic marking on *ugye* disappeared, the contribution of the sentence minus *ugye* is identical to that of any declarative, and *ugye* encodes the fact that the listener is committed to the truth of  $\phi$ . Although the contribution of *ugye* in stages four and five appear to be non-identical, they can be unified by saying that in both cases it attributes a commitment to the discourse agent who is the *interlocutor* of the default *perspective center* (Bylinina et al. 2014, also called as *epistemic reference point*, or *epistemic judge*, cf. Lasnik 2005, Stephenson 2007) of the speech act at hand. As discussed by McCready (2007) and Stephenson (2005), the perspective center is the speaker as a default, but it is obligatorily shifted to the hearer in questions.

**3. Formal modelling of the two contemporary readings.** The contribution of *ugye* to questions and assertions will be modelled in terms of conditions on the set of input-output context pairs  $\langle C, C' \rangle$ , that constitute the *context-change potentials* (CCP) of the sentences under consideration, reflecting the properties of the default speech acts made with the help of the sentence. The proposal is inspired by Davis (2011), Farkas and Bruce (2010), and Gunlogson (2003). It is argued that adequate modeling needs to make reference to the following contextual parameters.

- for each participant  $x$ , the set of *Public Commitments of  $x$*  in context  $C$ , referred to as  $PC_x^C$ ,
- for each participant  $x$ , the set of *Public Questions asked by  $x$*  in context  $C$ , referred to as  $PQ_x^C$ ,
- the semantic value of the sentence that was used to make the last question act by  $x$  in context  $C$ ,  $PQ_x^C[0]$ ,
- a set of discourse agents  $\mathbb{A}$ , among which the perspective center in context  $C$  will be referred to as  $P^C$ , and the counterpart of the perspective center as  $\mathbb{A} \setminus \{P\}^C$ .

(4)-(5) illustrate how the interpretation of a declarative form  $S\text{-}ugye \setminus$ , and a form  $S\text{-}ugye / \setminus$  can be given in terms of CCPs in the framework outlined above.  $\phi$  stands for the propositional content of  $S$ .

$$(4) \quad \llbracket S\text{-}ugye \setminus \rrbracket^{\mathbb{A}} = \{ \langle C, C' \rangle \mid \phi \in PC_{P^C}^{C'} \wedge \phi \in PC_{\mathbb{A} \setminus \{P\}}^C \}$$

$$(5) \quad \llbracket S\text{-}ugye / \setminus \rrbracket^{\mathbb{A}} = \{ \langle C, C' \rangle \mid PQ_{\mathbb{A} \setminus \{P\}}^{C'}[0] = \{ \phi, \neg \phi \} \wedge \phi \in PC_{\mathbb{A} \setminus \{P\}}^C \}$$

**4. Implications.** The paper compares the approach outlined above, which captures the contribution of *ugye* in terms of full actual commitment to those proposals that rely on enriching the representation of the context with projected (delayed) commitments, as in Malamud and Stephenson (2015), or with a component that marks the strength of evidence supporting the truth of a proposition, as in Farkas and Roelofsen (advance access).

We also consider possible theoretical drawbacks of the assumption that *ugye* targets the “complement” of the perspective center  $\mathbb{A} \setminus \{P\}^C$ . Whereas this move appears to successfully account for native speakers’ intuitions about the contribution of the particle across different utterance types, the question arises whether there is further evidence that this is a parameter of the context that operators can be sensitive to, or, assuming that perspective centers are parameters of Kaplanian contexts (Kaplan 1989), it might raise the suspicion that we proposing “monster” operators in the Kaplanian sense.

**References.** Asher, N. and B. Reese. 2007. Intonation and Discourse: Biased Questions. *Interdisc. Studies on Inf. Str.* 8 • Bylinina, L. et al. 2014. The Landscape of Perspective Shifting. In *Pronouns in Embedded Contexts at the Syntax-Semantics Interface*. Tübingen. • Davis, Ch. 2009. Decisions, Dynamics and the Japanese Particle *yo*. *JoS* 26. • Davis, Ch, 2011. *Constraining Interpretation: Sentence Final Particles in Japanese*. Diss. UMass. • Farkas, D. and K. Bruce. 2010. On Reacting to Assertions and Polar Questions. *JoS* 27. • Farkas, D. and F. Roelofsen, advance access. Division of Labor in the Interpretation of Declaratives and Interrogatives. *JoS*. • Gunlogson, Ch. 2003. *True to Form*. Routledge. • Gutzmann, D. 2015. *Use-Conditional Meaning*. OUP. • Gyuris, B. 2009. Sentence-Types, Discourse Particles, and Intonation in Hungarian. *Sinn und Bedeutung* 13. • Kaplan, D. 1989. Demonstratives. In Almog, J. et al. (eds.) *Themes from Kaplan*, OUP. • Krifka, M. 2017. Negated Polarity Questions as Denegations of Assertions. In Ch. Lee et al. (eds.) *Contrastiveness in Information Structure, Alternatives and Scalar Implicatures*. Springer. • Ladd, D. R. 1981. A First Look at the Semantics and Pragmatics of Negative Questions and Tag Questions. *CLS* 17. • Lasersohn, P. 2005. Context Dependence, Disagreement, and Predicates of Personal Taste. *L&P* 28. • Malamud, S. A. and T. Stephenson 2015. Three Ways to Avoid Commitments. *JoS* 32. • McCready, E. 2007. Context shifting in questions and elsewhere. *Sinn und Bedeutung* 11. • Reese, B. 2007. *Bias in Questions*. Diss. UTexas. • Stephenson, T. 2005. Assessor sensitivity: Epistemic modals and predicates of personal taste. In J. Gajewski et al. (eds.) *New Work on Modality*. MITWPL. • Zimmermann, M. 2011. Discourse Particles. In *Semantics* 2, ed. by K. von Stechow et al. de Gruyter.