1. Summary

In this paper I discuss one application of a theory whose general features have been presented elsewhere. The core of this theory is a formalism, with well-defined syntax and (model-theoretic) semantics, for the representation of propositional attitudes, complex mental states consisting of several connected attitudes, attitudinal change (i.e. the change from one attitudinal state to another), and attitudes shared by several agents. A second, though closely related purpose of the formalism is that it can serve as part of a semantics of attitude attributing sentences of natural language. In designing the formalism special attention was given to the internal connections between the contents of different attitudes. In the context of attitude attribution these connections manifest themselves as problems for the semantics of discourses consisting of several attitude attribution sentences, which either attribute different attitudes to the same agent at the same time, or different attitudes to the same agent at different times, or attitudes to different agents at the same or different times.

The one example to which the present paper is devoted is a “mini-discourse” consisting of two sentences which ascribe attitudinal changes to the same agent at two distinct times. The example illustrates two recurrent features of multi-sentence attitude attributing discourses. On the one hand it exemplifies the by now familiar fact that in a sequence of two or more sentences...
attitude attributions the later attributions tend to rely for their interpreta-
tion on the attributions which precede them. This is a phenomenon that
also arises when the attributions concern one and the same time (as well
as one and the same agent) and it is for such cases that it has been identi-
fied and discussed in the literature. But in addition the example illustrates
a number of issues that have to do with temporal reference and time. Some
of these arise at the level of the single sentence. This is true in particular of
the question how the tenses of the complement clauses of attitude attribut-
ing matrix verbs are semantically related to the tenses of the matrix verbs
themselves. But there are also time-related questions that concern the way
in which the two attitude attributing sentences are connected, as parts of a
single cohesive piece of discourse. On the one hand these have to do with
the circumstance that the sentences of our example attribute attitudinal
changes and on the other with the fact that these changes are said to have
occurred at different times. These temporal issues add a new dimension
to the general problem how earlier attributions can provide interpretation
contexts for later ones.

The theory which I will apply to the example of the paper is an extension
of Discourse Representation Theory as it is presented in for instance Kamp
& Reyle (1993). More accurately it is a combination of two extensions. One
of these concerns the representation of attitudinal states and the semantics
of that part of language which is used to describe such states; the other is
presupposition. This second extension too has been presented elsewhere. Abridged presentations of both extensions can be found in Kamp et al.
(2011).

I will assume some basic knowledge of DRT, roughly corresponding to
Chapters 1, 2 and 5 of Kamp & Reyle (1993). But in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 below I
give brief introductions to the two mentioned extensions, which should give
the reader enough to understand the treatment that follows in Section 4 of
the example that this paper is about. The remaining sections of the paper
are all quite short. Section 2 presents the example and lists the problems
connected with it on which we will focus. Section 5 sums up and restates
the principal morals.

---

3 Kamp (2001a, 2001b).