

What was believed, what was true: the case of *meğer*

Two points about *meğer*: The Turkish discourse marker *meğer* is usually used to contrast what the speaker considered to be true in the past with what was actually true as illustrated in (1). Importantly, *meğer* constructions require the use of the evidential *-mİş* as well.

- (1) Ben Zuko İstanbul-da san-mış-tı-m. #(Meğer) yurtdışın-a git*(-mİş).
 1.SG Zuko İstanbul-LOC think-ANT-PST-1.SG meğer abroad-DAT go-EVID
 ≈ ‘I thought that Zuko was in Istanbul. Apparently, he went abroad.’

Felicity conditions: *Meğer* constructions are felicitous in contexts where the speaker previously considered the prejacent to be false. This is illustrated in (1) where the truth of Zuko having been in Istanbul excludes the truth of his having gone abroad. Importantly, if their prejacent was already believed to be true, *meğer* constructions are infelicitous as shown in (2b). Crucially, if the context in (2a) guaranteed the previous belief that the prejacent was false, (2b) would be felicitous.

- (2) a. Context: Since he first went abroad, Gül has known that Zuko has been abroad.
 b. Gül: Dün Zuko-le konuş-tu-m. #Meğer yurtdışın-a git-miş.
 yesterday Zuko-COM talk-PST-1.SG meğer abroad-DAT go-EVID
 ≈ ‘I talked with Zuko yesterday. #Apparently he has been abroad.’

Additionally, I observe that even the possibility that the prejacent might have been false is enough to legitimize *meğer*. For example, (2b) is felicitous in (3).

- (3) Context: For all Gül knew before their talk, Zuko could have been anywhere.

The *meğer* clause as a continuation to the first sentence entertaining the falsity of the prejacent is also felicitous, as shown in (4).

- (4) Zuko yurtdışın-da mı değil mi bil-m-iyor-du-m. Meğer yurtdışın-da-y-mış.
 Zuko abroad-LOC Q not Q know-NEG-PROG-PST-1.SG meğer abroad-LOC-COP-EVID
 ≈ ‘I did not know whether Zuko was abroad or not. Apparently, he was.’

Morpho-syntactic properties: *Meğer* constructions are compatible with verbal and substantive predicates (1) and (5) respectively. But, in either case, *-mİş* is obligatory.

- (5) Ben Zuko İstanbul-da san-mış-tı-m. Meğer yurtdışın-da-y*(-mİş).
 1.SG Zuko İstanbul-LOC think-ANT-PST-1.SG meğer abroad-LOC-COP-EVID
 ≈ ‘I thought that Zuko was in Istanbul. Apparently, he was abroad.’

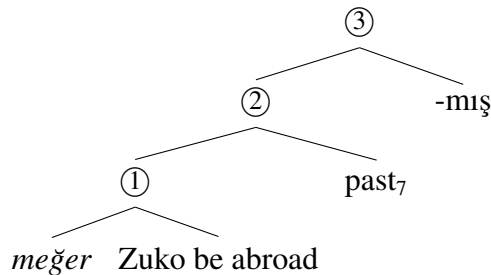
Finally, we observe that regardless of the aspect of the verbal predicate, the evidential marker is

obligatory, as shown in (6).

- (6) ... Meğer yurtdışın-a gid-iyor/ecek(*-miş).
 meğer abroad-LOC go-IMPERF/FUT-EVID
 ≈ ... ‘Apparently, he was going/would go abroad.’

Proposal: I propose that *meğer* constructions like (5) have the logical structure in (7). (8) is a sample derivation, adopting the referential analysis of tense (Partee 1973, cf. Ogihara 2007).

(7)



$\exists t'' [g(7) < t'' \wedge \exists w' [w' \text{ is compatible with what } s_c \text{ believe in } w_c \text{ at } t'' \wedge \text{Zuko is not abroad at } g(7) \text{ in } w' \wedge \forall w'' [w'' \text{ is compatible with the evidence in } w_c \text{ at } t_c, \text{Zuko is abroad at } g(7) \text{ in } w'']]$

(8) For any quadruple $\langle w_c, t_c, s_c, g_c \rangle$,

a. $\llbracket \textcircled{3} \rrbracket^{\langle w_c, t_c, s_c, g_c \rangle}$ is defined iff $g(7) < t_c \wedge$

b. If defined, $\llbracket \textcircled{3} \rrbracket^{\langle w_c, t_c, s_c, g_c \rangle} = \lambda w'. \text{Zuko is abroad at } g(7) \text{ in } w'$

Accordingly, *meğer* constructions comes with the definedness condition that the speaker previously believed that the prejacent might have been false, and current evidence suggests otherwise. They, however, assert that the prejacent is true. I argue that the former part of the presupposition comes from the meaning of *meğer*. Somewhat simplifying the contribution of *-miş*, I argue that it introduces the presupposition that the evidence currently points towards the truth of its prejacent.

Outcomes: (i) The definedness conditions present in the meaning of *meğer* ensure that *meğer* constructions can only be used in contexts where the speaker previously believed that the prejacent might have been false. This also accounts for their incompatibility with situations where the speaker always believed the prejacent to be true. (ii) The obligatoriness of the evidential is accounted for. *Meğer* necessarily introduces a change in the epistemic state of the speaker. This epistemic change does not occur haphazardly, but results from current evidence against the falsity of the prejacent. The existence of the contextual evidence towards the truth of the prejacent is specified as a definedness condition in the meaning of *-miş*, which *à la* Heim's (1991) *Maximize Presupposition!*, makes *-miş* obligatory with *-meğer* constructions. **Bibliography:** Partee, D. 1973. Some structural analogies between tenses and pronouns in English – Ogihara, T. 2007. Tense and aspect in truth-conditional semantics – Heim, I. 1991. Artikel und definitheit.