
On the link between proposition-denoting pro-forms and factivity. Evidence from embedded clauses in German

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In this talk, I examine the ambiguous behavior of the predicate *mögen* ‘like’ in (the history of) German and show that the pro-form *es* ‘it’ disambiguates its semantics and syntax. The verb *mögen* can be used either as a modal verb in the sense claimed by Reis (2001), (1), or as a factive verb, cf. (2):

- 1) *Julia mag Max (*zu) fotografieren*
Julia like.3SG Max to photograph.INF
‘Julia likes to take pictures of Max’
- 2) *Julia mag [es]_i [Max *(zu) fotografieren]_i*
Julia like.3SG it Max to photograph.INF
‘Julia likes to take pictures of Max’

I argue that *mögen* loses its modal verb status, as soon as it embeds the pro-form *es* as its internal argument referring to the attached clause. Main arguments for this analysis come from: i) embeddability of conditional clauses, ii) Spec,CP position restrictions, iii) Third Construction properties, and iv) root phenomena (cf. Frey 2016). Synchronically, I assume *es* to trigger a factive presupposition on the embedded clause, which, in turn, is analyzed as a CP lacking a Force-projection representing the illocutionary force. Diachronically, I show that the semantic shift of *mögen* from ‘being capable of doing something’ to ‘like’ in Early New High German (1350-1650), as described by Bech (1951), paved the way for the possibility of embedding factive complements.

References: • Frey, W. (2016): On properties of differentiating constructions with inner-sentential pro-forms for clauses. In: Inner-sentential Propositional Proforms: Syntactic Properties and Interpretative Effects ed. by W. Frey, A. Meinunger & K. Schwabe, 73-104. • Reis, M. (2001): Bilden Modalverben im Deutschen eine syntaktische Klasse. In: Modalität und Modalverben im Deutschen ed. by R. Müller & M. Reis, 287-318.