Won't get fooled again!

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introducing our main characters

German **weismachen**

(1)   Sie können mir doch nicht weismachen, dass es keine
        rechtlichen   Grundlagen hierfür gibt!
        "You can't fool me into thinking that there is no legal basis for
        this!"

Dutch **wijsmaken**

(2)   Men moet zichzelf niet wijsmaken dat de kans op een
         ongeluk   gering is
         "One should not fool oneself into believing that the odds of
         an accident are slight"

presupposition: embedded clause is false

(3)   a. Ze   maakte   me   wijs   dat   ze   rijk   was.

           she   made   me   wise that   she   rich   was

           "She fooled me into believing that she was rich"

      b. Maakte   zij   je   wijs   dat   ze   rijk   was?

           made   she   you   wise that   she   rich   was?

           "Did she fool you into thinking that she was rich?"

      c. Ze heeft   me   niet   wijsgemaakt dat   ze rijk   was

           she   has   me   not   wise-made   that   she   rich   was

           "She has not fooled me into believing that she was rich"

verbs of deception in English

betray
cheat
circumvent
defraud
delude
disappoint
dupe
entrap
falsify
fool
hoodwink
swindle
trick
victimize

bamboozle
beat
beguile
bilk
buffalo
burn
clip
con
cozen
ensnare
fake
fleece
gouge
gull

hoax
hook
humbug
outwit
rob
scam
screw
sell
skin
beat out of
cross up
double-cross
impose upon
lead on

play joke on
pull fast one
put on
suck in
take advantage of
take for
take for ride
take in
take somebody to the cleaners

4

licensing polarity items by emotive factives

(5) a. I regret I said anything untoward.

[= I wish I hadn't]

b. I am amazed he did anything at all

[= I expected him not to do anything]

c. I am indignant that he offered them anything at all

[= I consider it not acceptable that he did]

no NPI-licensing by *wijsmaken/weismachen*

(6) a. *Jan maakte me wijs dat hij **ook maar iets** gezien had

"Jan fooled me into believing he had seen anything at all"

b. *Hans versuchte mir weiszumachen dass er **auch nur etwas** gesehen hatte

"Hans tried to fool me into believing he had seen anything at all"

unlike verbs of denial

(7)   a. Jan   ontkende dat   hij   **ook maar iets** gezien had
               Jan   denied   that he   anything at all seen   had
               'Jan denied having seen anything at all '
      b. Hans   leugnete dass er **auch nur etwas**   gesehen hatte
               Hans   denied   that he anything at all   seen   had
               'Hans denied having seen anything at all'

Strawson entailment (von Fintel 1999)

Strawson Downward and Upward Entailingness

A function f of type <σ,τ> is Strawson-DE iff for all x, y of type σ such that x $\Rightarrow$ y (generalized entailment: x is more specific than y) and f(x) is defined (i.e. its presuppositions are met): f(y) $\Rightarrow$ f(x).

A function f of type <σ,τ> is Strawson-UE iff for all x, y of type σ such that x $\Rightarrow$ y and f(y) is defined (i.e. its presuppositions are met): f(x) $\Rightarrow$ f(y).

wijsmaken is Strawson UE

(9)   Piet maakte Marie wijs dat hij uit Amsterdam kwam

        (P. told Marie falsely he was from A.)

        Piet kwam niet uit Amsterdam

        (P. was not from A., presupposition of prior premise)

        Piet kwam niet uit Nederland

        (P. was not from NL, presupposition of conclusion)

         ∴ Piet maakte Marie wijs dat hij uit Nederland kwam

        (P. told M. falsely he was from NL)

In other words: if we disregard the presuppositions, *wijsmaken* is just a verb of saying, and upward entailing. If Piet claims to be from Amsterdam, he claims to be from the Netherlands.

adding matrix negation improves matters

Dutch

Jan maakte me niet wijs dat hij **ook maar iets** gezien had

'Jan did not fool me into thinking that he saw anything at all'

German

Hans versuchte mir nicht weiszumachen das er **auch nur etwas** gesehen hatte

'Hans did not try to make me believe that he had seen anything at all'

Dutch idioms of disbelief

(10) a. Maak dat de kat wijs!

make that the cat wise

'Try and convince the cat of that = that is bullshit'

b. Maak dat de ganzen wijs!

make that the geese wise

'Tell it to the geese = I don't believe a word of it'

expressions of disbelief

(11)

a. Je maakt mij niet wijs dat Fred komt.   [Dutch]

   'You won't fool me into believing Fred is coming'

b. Sie machen mir nicht weis, dass es Ihnen ernst ist   [German]

   'You won't get me to believe that you are serious'

negation in conjunct

(12)   Bah! macht das weis , wem Ihr   wollt,   nur   keinem
         amerikanischen Arbeiter!

         'Bah, tell that (bullshit) to anyone you want, just not
         to an American worker!'

requirements for pragmatic enrichment

a. wijsmaken/weismachen appears in a future oriented context (mostly a simple present with future/habitual reading)   [requirement to be revised]

b. under negation

c. the referent of the indirect object must be available for establishing the point of view

futurate reading of simple present and past

(15) Je maakt mij niet wijs dat het vliegende schotels waren
   'You won't fool me into thinking that those were flying saucers'

(16) Je maakte mij niet wijs dat vliegende schotels bestonden
   'You could not make me believe that flying saucers existed'

contexts of *weismachen/wijsmaken*

context	German #	German %	Dutch	Dutch #	Dutch %
brauchen 'need'	-	-	hoeven	9	1.2
futurate	3	0.6	futurate	65	8.4
haben 'have'	25	5.0	hebben	112	14.5
imperative	4	0.8	imperative	19	2.5
können 'can'	31	6.2	kunnen	40	5.2
lassen 'let'	10	2.0	laten	48	6.2
mögen 'want'	11	2.2	moeten 'must'	55	7.1
sollen 'should'	7	1.4	zullen 'will'	6	0.8
versuchen 'try'	45	9.0	proberen/trachten	53	6.5
werden (passive)	35	7.0	worden/zijn	14	1.8
wollen 'want'	289	57.8	willen	21	2.7
other	40	8.0	other	314	40.7
Total	500	100		771	100

double *wollen*

(18)   Du willst mir doch tatsächlich nicht weismachen wollen, dass Hunde weidende Pferde mit Hunden verwechseln und diese deshalb jagen?

        'Surely you don't want to have me believe that dogs confuse grazing horses with dogs, and   therefore hunt them?'

negation and auxiliaries (German)

auxiliary		#	negated	% negated
wollen	want	289	33	11.4
versuchen	try	45	1	2.2
werden	passive be	35	1	2.9
können	can	31	18	58.1
haben	perfective have	25	4	16
lassen	let	10	5	50
imperative		4	2	50
futurate		3	3	100
none (imperfect)	40	-	-	0

negation and auxiliaries (Dutch)

auxiliary		#	negated	% negated
hebben	perfective have	112	5	4.5
moeten	must/should	55	47	85.5
proberen/trachten	try	53	1	1.9
laten	let	48	33	68.8
kunnen	can	40	19	47.5
worden/zijn	passive be	14	-	-
mogen	may	9	6	66.7
hoeven	need	9	9	100
zullen	will	6	4	66.7
gaan	futurate go	5	4	80
imperative		17	6	35.3
futurate		65	65	100
none (imperfect)		312	-	-

wijsmaken in questions

(19) a. Wil je me wijsmaken dat dat mag?

'Do you want me to believe that that is allowed?'

b. Probeer je me wijs te maken dat je kunt zwemmen?

'Are you trying to fool me into believing that you can swim?'

c. #Maak je me wijs dat je kunt zwemmen?

'Are you fooling me into believing that you can swim?'

d. Wie wil je wijsmaken dat je kunt zwemmen?

'Who do you want to fool into believing that you can swim?'

wijsmaken in comparative

(20)   Er worden minder misdaden gepleegd dan de regering de mensen wijsmaakt

'Fewer crimes are committed than the government wants the people to believe'

No implicature of disbelief. The writer presupposes the embedded proposition to be false, but 'the people' may well be fooled by the government

free indirect discourse (Dutch)

(21)   Hij had willen weggaan, maar nu deed hij het niet. Verkoos niet uitgelachen te worden door dien lammen Verkerk.... met zijn kwasi-onverschilligheid. Niemand maakte hem wijs dat de vent zich niet geweldig voelde om zijn knappen kop. Knappe kop.... jawel....

'He had wanted to leave, but now he did not. Chose not to be laughed at by that lame Verkerk...with his so-called indifference. Nobody was going to make him believe that the guy did not feel great because of his handsome face. Handsome face..yeah right.'

Carry van Bruggen, *De vergelding*. Amsterdam n.d. [1923].

from the minutes of a meeting

(22)	Het is leuk als salamanders elkaar kunnen vinden, maar de gemeente maakt hem niet wijs dat de grond primair een ecologische functie heeft.

'It is nice that salamanders will be able to find each other, but the municipality won't fool him into thinking that the land primarily has an ecological destination'

subject indiscriminacy

Subject indiscriminacy of a predicate P

For P, the identity of the subject is irrelevant. Whenever P is predicated of an individual within the relevant local context, it applies to all other individuals in that context.

subjects for negated *wijsmaken*

future	Adriaanse	name	1
present	Copca	name	1
	de nuchtere Afrikaan	the level-headed African	1
	de veertiger	the 40 year old	1
	ge	**you (Flemish)**	**1**
	ik	I	1
	je	**you**	**43**
	niemand	nobody	4
	u	**you (polite)**	**5**
	verkopers	sellers	1
	ze	**they (generic)**	**5**
	Total		64

subject-indirect object pairs likely to be negated (Dutch)

SU-IO		#	negated	% negated
je mij	you (weak), me (strong)	33	33	100%
je me	you (weak), me (weak)	6	6	100%
u mij	you (polite), me (strong)	1	1	100%
u me	you (polite), me (weak)	5	5	100%
ze mij	they (generic), me (strong)	14	12	85.7%
men mij	one (generic), me (strong)	1	1	100%

subject-indirect object pairs likely to be negated (German)

SU-IO		#	negated	% negated
du mir	you me	21	19	90.5%
ihr mir	you (pl) me	2	2	100%
Sie mir	you (polite) me	9	9	100%
man mir	one (generic) me	5	2	40%

analysis

Implicature:

(24) $\neg \Diamond_j$ Weismachen(x,y,p) $\rightsquigarrow$ Confident(y, $\neg$p)

Present futurate:

(25) $\Box_j \neg$Weismachen(x,y,p)

(equivalent to (24), yields same implicature)

Point of view:

(26)   j = y

When y is a first person pronoun, this is automatically the case, otherwise point of view must shift to non-speaker (as in free indirect discourse or reported speech)

cases with *wollen*

Implicature generated:

(28)   Du willst mir doch damit nicht weismachen , dass ein Kater von 9 Kg normal ist?

    'Surely you don't want to have me believe that a 9 kg tomcat is normal'

Implicature not generated:

(29)   Mittlerweile habe ich eine sehr nette Hebamme, die mir nicht weismachen will, wie toll   Schmerzen und Wehen sind und bei der ich meine eigene Meinung äußern darf.

    'I now have a very nice midwife, one who does not want to have me believe that pain and contractions are wonderful, and who listens to my own opinions.'

pragmatic enrichment and polarity

(30)   a.   John is not himself today.   [contradiction or pragmatically enriched as: his usual self]

           b.   At the farm, John can be himself. [tautology or pragmatically enriched as: his true self]

horen zeggen 'hear say' in Dutch

(31) a. Je   hoort mij niet   zeggen   dat   hij onschuldig   is

you   hear   me not   say   that   he innocent   is

'You won't hear me say he is innocent'

b. Ik hoor je   niet   zeggen   dat   hij onschuldig   is.

I   hear you   not   say   that   he innocent   is

'I am not hearing you say that he is innocent'

horen zeggen 'hear say' in future negated contexts

SU – IO	translation	#
je mij	you me	30
u mij	you [polite] me	8
je ons	you us	3
je *name*	you name	3
men mij	one me	2
je haar	you her	1
je hem	you him	1
je niemand	you nobody	1
jullie mij	you [plur] me	1
je die	you those [them]	1
je ze	you them	1

conclusions

- wijsmaken/weismachen are unusual among verbs of denial in that they take propositional arguments

- they belong to a rare category of contrafactive verbs which presuppose the falsity of their complement

- they do not trigger polarity items in their complement as predicted by von Fintel's Strawson-entailment theory

- they develop a special use under negation in certain modal and futurate contexts

- in this use, point of view is important and allocated to the indirect object and an implicature is generated such that the referent of the indirect object is committed to the falsity of the embedded clause

conclusions (continued)

- mostly, the point of view of the speaker is retained, leading to an immense bias toward first person singular pronouns in indirect object position
- the subject of *weismachen/wijsmaken* is irrelevant to the implicature at hand
- it is mostly second person or generic
- the implicature explains the interaction with modality and futurate readings
- other cases of pragmatic enrichment leading to polarity sensitivity have been adduced, including the case of Dutch *horen zeggen* which is polarity sensitive in the same contexts as *weismachen*
- so presumably, this type of polarity sensitive usage may develop among verbs of communication

THANKS FOR LISTENING!