

Particles as Context Markers and Speech Act Markers

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The talk/paper presents an alternative view on the presuppositional analysis of particles like too, also, indeed, again, already, toch, immers, but, however, etc. It is argued that they are better understood as obligatory markers of relations between what is said in the sentence and context parameters, especially the topic and the common ground. Their presuppositional properties are derived from the OT analysis of this sort of marking.

It turns out that more particles can be brought under this heading than is possible with just a presuppositional analysis, though their precise analysis does not necessarily become clearer. There is another category of particles (e.g. therefore, that's why, because, then) with clearer meanings that are best understood as speech act markers. In some cases, the context markers can be seen as further developments of these.

The context markers are the product of grammaticalisation processes, both under the viewpoint of the current analysis and by looking at the relevant criteria. The real question they raise is how it is possible that certain max(R)-constraints arise with functional support, but without any preceding universality.