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AFTER ALL IS NOT SO CONVENTIONALIZED, AFTER ALL THE EVOLUTION OF THE MEANING OF DISCOURSE MARKERS

This study focuses on the diachronic development of the discourse marker *after all* in English. Unlike other approaches by Traugott (1997) or Lewis (2007), the present analysis suggests that the uses of *after all* are not contingent on conventionalization, whereby stable meaning-form pairings emerge. The alternative proposed here is that the justificative and concessive uses of this and similar expressions follow naturally from the meanings of the individual lexical items found in these expressions. Thanks to the intuitive connection between the original meaning and the newly acquired uses, this discourse marker does not require as much consolidation as in the case of grammaticalized forms where the connection is less obvious.

1. Introduction

Among reasons why discourse markers have attracted considerable attention in recent research is that they are conveniently circumscribed case studies of the process of grammaticalization, its products (newly emerged language forms), their usage and semantic properties. The phrase *after all* is one of many examples of forms discussed by numerous authors (e.g. Traugott 1988, 1997; Brinton 2007; Blakemore 2002; Lewis 2006) who treat it as a discourse marker serving to indicate the speaker's rhetorical stance toward an utterance. Here, in the example below, "tomorrow is another day" is the host clause of *after all* meant to introduce a fact that, in the mind of the speaker, justifies the optimism of the preceding statements.

- (1) Tara! Home. I'll go home. And I'll think of some way to get him back. After all... tomorrow is another day. (1939, *Gone with the Wind*)

Additionally, as closed-class forms, discourse markers are an interesting study topic that can shed some light on the semantic capabilities of grammatical forms.

These are traditionally considered to convey general, minimal, highly schematic meanings. For example, Evans (2011) contrasts open- and closed-class forms and shows that the former convey “rich semantic content” while the latter encode “schematic semantic content” (p. 88). The present study focuses on what kind of meaning *after all* contributes to discourse, how it behaves and how it evolved to exhibit its properties described here.

Before I trace the diachronic development of the marker, I will first briefly characterize the meanings associated with the marker and discuss the reasons why it should be considered a grammatical form.

2. Senses of *after all*

Three main uses of *after all* have been identified. The original use expresses a literal temporal specification of an event. In the following example, failure to understand occurs after finding an infinite amount of information.

- (2) A man may find an infinite number of propositions, reasonings, and conclusions, in books of metaphysics... and, after all, know as little of God, spirits, or bodies as he did before he set out. (John Locke, 1690, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*)

Further, it also has a concessive function paraphrasable as ‘nevertheless’ or ‘despite what has occurred’. In (2), the speaker can be interpreted as expressing surprise at the listener being alive, despite prior indications to the contrary.

- (3) So you’re alive after all. (John Grisham, *The Litigators*)

Finally, *after all* commonly serves as a justificative marker, used to introduce a point that bolsters a claim made in the preceding segment. In (4), *after all* is a sentence adverb that has scope over the entire host clause.

- (4) Come on, Andy, let’s go to the circus and forget all our worries for a while. After all, that’s what circuses are for. (Tom Clancy, *High Wire*)

The uses in (3) and (4) present a puzzle: How has a marker acquired two apparently opposite meanings? In 1983, Levinson conceded that “proper studies of these terms” were necessary, but one tentative approach he proposed was to account for them in terms of conventional implicature. This would be consistent with the idea championed by Traugott that the meaning associated with discourse markers in their development was acquired by means of pragmatic strengthening. Here, the concessive and justificative functions could be treated as stable non-truth conditional content (conventional implicatures) of the phrase *after all*. As she put it, “there is an increase in the extent to which

the words encode the speaker's point of view on the situation." (Traugott 1988: 408)

However, the conventional implicature approach to *after all* will be contested in this paper. I will attempt to provide a arguments against viewing the concessive and justificative senses as stable conventionalized meanings of *after all*. The main claim of this paper is that the central part of the meaning of *after all* is not an indication of the rhetorical stance, but the sense of emphasis resulting from the temporal meaning of the original use of the phrase, which grammaticalized into its present form.

The precise meaning of *after all* is constrained by its grammatical nature. Discourse markers are closed-class forms, or at least they should be viewed as being located toward the closed-class end of the lexicon-grammar continuum. We now turn to reasons justifying a closed-class characterization of *after all*.

3. Grammatical forms

The phrases *after all* as used in (3) and (4) can be considered closed-class forms. This is a rather uncontroversial approach taken by others, among whom Brinton & Traugott who claim that such uses "come to belong to a functional rather than to a lexical word class" (2005: 146). There are a number of indications pointing at this particular characterization. Some of the reasons why discourse markers should be considered closed class-forms include:

- The elusiveness of the sense
- The gradual emergence out of the lexical
- Non-propositional content
- Generality of meaning
- Lack of conceptual autonomy

3.1. The elusiveness of the sense

The descriptions of the sense of *after all* provided in section 2 are mere approximations. Their more precise characterizations will be attempted further in this paper. At this point, suffice it to say that the concessive and justificative uses are not synonymous with many other concessive or justificative forms. They have not been captured satisfactorily in the literature, and it should therefore be little wonder that they are a challenge to non-linguists. This point has been made by Blakemore who proposed, "[a]sk a native speaker what these mean, and you are much more likely to receive a description or illustration of their use than a straightforward paraphrase." (2002: 83)

3.2. The gradual emergence out of the lexical

As will be discussed below, the concessive and justificative uses of *after all* did not enter the language overnight. They evolved out of the temporal use, changing its syntactic properties, indicating the grammaticalization nature of the process, which in turn suggests that the products are closed-class forms.

3.3. Non-propositional content

Further, the concessive and justificative functions are by nature non-truth-conditional senses typical of closed-class forms.

3.4. Generality of meaning

Another property of closed-class forms is that their meanings can be applied to a wide range of descriptions. As Cruse (1986: 5) explains, “[b]ecause grammatical elements typically need to have the capacity to combine normally with semantically very various roots, their meanings tend to be of a very general sort: the notion of past tense, for instance, can combine without anomaly virtually any conceivable verbal notion.” Similarly, the concessive and justificative functions can be used in a variety of contexts.

3.5. Lack of conceptual autonomy

Open-class forms are generally conceptually autonomous (Langacker 2008); that is, they convey concepts that can function semantically on their own. By contrast, grammatical functors are conceptually dependent or synsemantic—their existence is justified insofar as they complement open class forms and they do not make much sense without conceptualizing the open-class meanings that they attach to. Without mentioning any circumstances or claims, it would make little sense to use *after all* alone. In fact, in the absence of any propositional content, the phrase *after all* would be unintelligible, ambiguous between its two senses.

4. History

The first detailed diachronic analysis of *after all* was offered by Traugott (1997), who identified three main stages of its development:

I. Temporal

The original sense had to do with a straightforward temporal sequence of events. In example (5), the last event (death) is mentioned as following a long

succession of hardships of life. At this stage, there are no clear signs of either concession or justification in its use.

- (5) Sinne is the first and onely cause of all our distresse, of all our sicknesses and heavinesse here on earth: which hath brought us to that estate, that **after all our turmoyling & paines taking**, we must at the last, talke and take death as a merit and paiment for our sinnes. (Christof Wirsung 1589, *Praxis Medicinae Universalis*)

II. Concessive (\approx despite everything)

The concessive sense is an extension of the temporal stage. Its characteristic property is that it stresses a logical discontinuity between the preceding events enumerated first and the conclusion described in the *after all* host clause.

- (6) How dreadful is the state of apostates who have had their eyes opened, their consciences awakened, their resolutions for Christ seemingly fixed; and yet, **after all this**, return to their former course of sin. (John Flavel, 1689, *Christ Knocking at the Door of Sinners' Hearts*)

III. Justificative (\approx indeed, in fact)

Finally, the justificative use emerged, as exemplified in (7). This use represents a wider deviation from the original temporal use in that the last claim introduced by *after all* does not usually follow temporally the events mentioned first. Instead, it is an afterthought offered in order to justify or make sense of the facts presented in previous discourse.

- (7) "In 1726, a Writer belonging to a Tribunal, and another employed in the Post-Office, were condemned to die, for having inserted certain Falsehoods in the Gazette: The Reason, upon which the Tribunal of criminal Affairs founded their Judgment, was, that what they had done shewed a Failure of Respect towards his Majesty, which is by the Laws declared capital. **After all**, no Remedy is more likely to prove effectual in preventing the Corruption and Oppressions of the Governors, than that which the Emperor Yong-ching applied..." (1747 Thomas Astley, *The Empire of China*)

II b Epistemic (\approx as we know)

Traugott also identified an additional stage IIb termed "Epistemic". This use can be paraphrased by saying 'as we all know'. In Traugott's and in the following example, it follows an adversative 'but'. It should be noted that it bears properties of both the concessive and the justificative senses. Like the concessive use, it points out an apparent inconsistency between two claims,

and like the justificative use, the conclusion does not follow the first claim temporally.

- (8) Freedom is better than tyranny; but, after all, French freedom has battled for a hundred years only to be suppressed by the peasants of France (A. Littell 1866, *The Living Age*)

A similar account of the development of *after all* can be found in Lewis (2007), who observes that it “became a connective relatively recently (not earlier than the eighteenth century, and arguably later). (p.94) Lewis’ account differs in that she does not discuss the epistemic stage and she focuses more on the specific kinds of temporal phrases that could be treated as precursors of the later uses. She proposes “a pattern of [[*After all* N] + [contrasting idea]]”, where the phrase *after all* collocates with nouns like *pains*, *labour*, *travail*, *effort*, as illustrated by the following example.

- (9) Yet after all heuynesse, penaunce, and dysconfyture, She reioysed in soule. (1513, OED) (ex. 9a, p. 95)

Lewis stresses the contrast between the later event and the earlier event. Although the transition from suffering to rejoicing is a temporal one, an additional contrastive implicature is triggered. In later uses, the temporal element is weakened, and the phrase starts being used without a noun. Still, the expression compressed to the noun-less phrase *after all* carries the implicit content of contrast that the noun would express; it is thus “best seen as an evolved shorthand, a compression of information, or a form of economy” (p. 98)

5. The conventionalization of the senses

What the two analyses have in common is that they take a discourse- and coherence-based approach to trace the development of additional senses in the marker. Two principal uses of *after all* emerge which involve a concessive relation on the one hand and the justificative use on the other. They also converge on the conclusion that the two sense have developed as parts of the meaning of *after all*. Lewis’ account differs in that she stresses the regular nature of the emergence of *after all*, pointing out that “there is no evidence of a metaphorical leap in the history of the expression”. She argues that there is no ad-hoc innovation, but a straightforward development of *after all* with its prototypical sense. Implicit in this account is the assumption that the evolution described by Lewis was practically destined to happen.

My approach represents an even more radical departure. In what follows, I will argue that the two uses are not stable parts of the meaning, but, at best, implicatures made by the speaker counting on the listener to infer them from

context. The concession or justification in question often accompany many temporal descriptions and they seem to attach to the meaning of the expression without being true parts of its content. This account, if accurate, would lend support to Lewis' view of the development as being straightforward or indeed ultimately inevitable. Although I take issue with the assumption of the conventionalization of concession and justification as senses of *after all*, I side with Lewis' view that development of *after all* follows a rather predictable path.

The following is an enumeration of reasons why concession and justification should be treated as accompanying semantic components, contextual inferences, but not stable senses of *after all*.

5.1. The role of context

In examples (10a-b), the relation of the underlined clause would be clear even in the absence of *after all*. In (10a), the first segment introduces a claim which is then bolstered by following it with an idea that is indisputable. This ordering makes it transparent that the second segment is provided as justification. This pattern was described by Lewis (2006: 10): "The nature of the relation thus accounts for constraints on the types of segments that can be related by a particular marker: in this case, a relatively uncertain idea must be followed by a more certain one."

- (10) a. You really should help him. He's your brother!
 b. Kevin is so attached to Fido. Maybe pets as Christmas gifts isn't such a bad idea.

In (10b), the observation in the first segment is followed by a tentative reflection which presupposes an antithesis by invoking a counterfactual. Background counterfactuals are normally generated by using the negative (Talmy 2000)¹, as in this case, or by stressing the verb (*So you ARE a vegetarian. She DID know about it*).

The justificative (10a) and the concessive sense (10b) are evident enough. They can be deduced from the meanings of the utterances alone; marking these senses by means of *after all* is not really necessary and is only done for extra emphasis.

5.2. Mutually exclusive effects

If *after all* does encode the senses that are attributed to it, it achieves a cognitive effect by satisfying two of three possible requirements (ii and iii)

¹ As Talmy explains, "a syntactically negative clause (e.g., *I didn't go to John's party last night*) overtly names something that did not take place but tends to evoke consideration of the corresponding unrealized positive event" (Talmy 2000, 291)

identified by Blakemore (2002). She argues that an “input achieves a cognitive effect if:

- (i) it allows the derivation of contextual implications;
or
- (ii) it strengthens an existing assumption;
or
- (iii) it leads to the contradiction and elimination of an existing assumption.”
(Blakemore 2002: 95)

While in principle there is no reason why a marker couldn’t meet more than one requirement, the problem here is that requirements (ii) and (iii) are mutually antonymous, and it is rather odd for a language form to encode two antonymous senses. Such inherent antonymy is found rarely if at all, and when it does occur, it is resisted². It makes more sense to assume that *after all* signals a rhetorical link between the point expressed in the same clause and the information mentioned in earlier discourse, while the senses of concession and justification are derived from context.

It could even be ventured that rhetorical relations like concession can be free inferences that a listener create at will, whether or not they are intended by the speaker or validated by context. If that is the case, concession does not need to be contingent on any dedicated markers to encode it, a point summarized by Łyda (2007) in these words “Concession ... may have its surface markers like *although* and *but*, yet most frequently the markers are absent and, even more importantly, equally often the same expressions do not function as markers of Concession.” (p.16)

5.3. The role of position and stress

In a specific instance, the exact function of *after all* can be deduced based on some formal properties of its use. The justification sense favors the initial position preceding the clause (11a), while the concessive *after all* usually follows it (11b).

- (11) a. Help him. **After all**, you’re his father / ... you’re his father, **after all**.
b. So it turns out you *are* his father, **after all!**

² For example, where public safety is at stake, a mere possibility of confusion resulting from antonymy has led to the avoidance of the form *inflammable* (in favor of *flammable*) on the grounds that *inflammable* can be interpreted as meaning ‘not combustible’ instead of the intended ‘highly combustible’. (Garner 2000, 148)

The above is only a tendency, but its informative value is enhanced by the stress / intonation clues. In American English, the justificative *after all* is usually stressed on *all* and tends to have rising intonation (12a), while the concessive use is stressed on *after* with falling intonation (12b).

- (12) a. Help him. **After áll** /, you're his father.
 b. So it turns out you *are* his father, *áfter all* !!

5.4. Rhetorical strategies

Although the concessive and justificative senses are generally mutually antonymous, there is little room for ambiguity because they are employed in two clearly distinct rhetorical strategies. The justificative sense links back to some prior information, whether it is a clause or a non-linguistic event (Blakemore 1996: 338), as in the following example. In other words, the justificative function always occurs in the presence of two information segments: the claim (the first segment) and the justification (the following segment).

- (13) [the speaker takes an extremely large slice of cake]
 After all, it is my birthday. (Blakemore 1996: 338)

The concessive use does not require any relevant facts to be present in immediately preceding turns. According to Lewis “it contains a presupposition that the hearer retrieves – the notion that the antithesis was expected – and it can therefore begin a discourse” (p. 92). The speaker can, apparently out of the blue, announce *So the world isn't going to end now, after all* without a known history of ever worrying about the end of the world. What this means is that the lag between the antithesis and the counter-expectation *after all* can be fairly indefinite and the antithesis may—but does not need to—be a specific statement or event that actually took place or was entertained by the speaker. Instead, the use of the concessive *after all* works as if the antithesis was an actual event or statement.

The significance of this difference is that the two patterns of use are not idiosyncratic properties of expressions but are typical of the two rhetorical strategies. Justification only makes sense when it serves to support a point that is currently being entertained. On the other hand, counter-expectation is only an additional part attached to a fairly independent event – making an assertion, which may conflict with generally known facts and these do not have to have just been brought up. This is a non-linguistic fact and can therefore be expected to be cross-linguistically universal, which it is. These are rhetorical strategies that the markers happen to exploit, but do not encode themselves. It is possible to concede a point that conflicts with an antithesis that is not present in immediately preceding discourse, and this is possible in at least the languages represented below:

- (14) a. A więc jednak świat się nie skończy teraz. (Polish)
 And so still world itself not end now.
 ‘So the world isn’t going to end now, after all.’
- b. A přece jenom svět nekončí v roce 2014. (Czech)
 And still only world not end in year 2014.
 ‘So the world isn’t going to end in 2014, after all.’
- c. Afinal o mundo não vai acabar agora. (Portuguese)
 In the end the world not go end now.
 ‘So the world isn’t going to end now, after all.’
- d. Så verden går trods alt under i 2014. (Danish)
 So world go despite all under in 2014.
 ‘So the world isn’t going to end in 2014, after all.’
- e. Niisiis vaatamata kõigele ei tule 2014. aastal maailmalõppu. (Estonian)
 So despite everything not 2014 year end of the world.
 ‘So the world isn’t going to end in 2014, after all.’
- f. So wird die Welt trotz allem 2014 nicht untergehen. (German)
 So will the world despite all 2014 not end.
 ‘So the world will not end in 2014, after all.’
- g. Anu, moukhedavad kvelafrisa, 2014 cels msofflio dasarulisken ar midis. (Georgian)
 So, despite all, 2014 year world to the end isn’t going.
 ‘So despite all, in 2014 the world isn’t going to end.’

6. The meaning of *after all*

In light of the above, it is unlikely that the marker *encodes* concession or justification. Instead, an alternative would be to assume that it has become *associated* with pre-existing rhetorical relations. In the case of concession, *after all* customarily attaches to an otherwise clear contrastive transition.

This raises the question of what differentiates *after all* from many other concessive markers. Generally, the purpose of a concessive marker is to indicate the admission of the truth of a point which is in contrast to a fact mentioned in the preceding discourse. What all concessive markers share is the juxtaposition of two conflicting facts, and the indication that the resulting contrast is surprising, in line with the observation that “[i]f two circumstances are in contrast, it means that the one is SURPRISING or UNEXPECTED in view of the other.” (Leech & Svartvik 1975: 210) original emphasis).

While *but* would simply signal an unexpected development, *after all* emphasizes the fact that the odds were strongly against the circumstance named in the host clause. The conjunction *but* does not evaluate the odds; it can be used at the slightest hint of conflict (15b). On other hand, *after all* requires the existence of strong reasons against the idea mentioned in the host clause (16a). Examples like (16b) below are only acceptable to the extent that they make the listener form a conjecture about other possible counter-indications against going for a walk. However, if the slightly overcast sky is the only contraindication to taking a walk, then the use of *after all* as an indication of a change of heart is excessive and unjustified.

- (15) a. It's raining cats and dogs, but we'll go for a walk.
 b. It's slightly overcast, but we'll go for a walk.
- (16) a. It's raining cats and dogs and it's freezing. Still, anything's better than staying home. Well, we'll go for a walk, after all.
 b. ?It's slightly overcast. Still, anything's better than staying home. Well, we'll go for a walk, after all.

Thus, the marker's real contribution is that it carries a reference to the multiplicity of factors that go into the final determination expressed in the host clause. This is a residual meaning component which persisted in the expression from its original temporal uses. If it is assumed, following Lewis (2007), that the precursors of *after all* were originally phrases summarized as the [[*After all* N] pattern (as in example 9 above) or the expression *after all is said and done* (first recorded in 1560), it becomes clear where the reference to multiple preceding factors comes from. That is, all the precursor expressions stress that what precedes the fact mentioned in the host clause is not a mere single event but a considerable body of developments (i.e. whether *pains* or things *said and done*). Each [*after all* N] use underscores the magnitude of the contextual backdrop against which a fact is considered, and thus also increased the intensity of the concessive or the justificative relation. That is, if there were strong misgivings about a circumstance mentioned in the host clause (17), the use of *after all* indicates an abrupt reversal of circumstances. In some cases it may also underscore the tentative nature of the statement and thus serve as a hedging device.

- (17) Maybe there is a way out, after all.

Similarly, in the justificative use, *after all* underscores the considerable importance of the assertion made in the host clause. It is not a mere remark made in passing, but the most vital determinant consideration accounting for what is said in the preceding statement.

- (18) She was being unfair. It was hardly his fault she was on her own. After all, she was the one who'd been having an affair. (Coleen Nolan, *Denial*)

The marker's emphasis on the considerations involved in a decision can be viewed as a consequence of meaning inherited from the original temporal uses. To take one example of the many precursor expressions, the clause *after all is said and done* foregrounds a decision-making process preceding the final pronouncement. It highlights in a rather direct manner its debate nature: it underscores the cogitation, the back and forth, and the pros and cons. The concessive *after all* puts the cogitation in the background, and instead, it focuses on the product of the cogitation: the apparent conflict between two facts (evident after the consideration of facts / arguments). Similarly, the justificative *after all* too backgrounds the cogitation, focusing on the product of the cogitation: finding a logical link between an assertion and a well-known fact.

Contributing to the emphatic character of this discourse marker is the presence in it of the adverbial *all*, which has been observed to recur in the grammaticalization of a great number of function forms in many languages (König 1985). In general, universal quantification has an intensifying function exploited by forms like *always*, *although*, *however*, expressions *all alone*, *all the rage*, *all ears*, *all but*, *all up with*, *be all go*, or the recent quotative marker *be all* (e.g. *She's all no*) (Buchstaller 2014). An in-depth analysis of the development and meaning of *albeit*, also involving the universal quantifier *all* is offered by Molencki (1997). In the case of the concessive *after all*, the intensifying function of universal quantification is realized in accordance with the logic that “[o]n any scale, a situation which is depicted as being entirely at one end is clearly ready made to be used concessively, provided that the end specified is that least readily compatible with the main clause, which is nevertheless represented as true.” (Harris 1988: 80)

This continuation of a meaning from the temporal use into the present grammaticalized form of *after all* is consistent with the idea of persistence as defined by Hopper (1991: 22):

When a form undergoes grammaticalization from a lexical to a grammatical function, some traces of its original lexical meanings tend to adhere to it, and *details of its lexical history may be reflected* in constraints on its grammatical distribution.

Similarly, the translational equivalents of *after all* in the following languages make reference to the end of a reasoning process by either using the word ‘end’ (19a) or the preposition ‘after’ (19b).

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------|-------------|
| (19) | a. letzten Endes | (German) |
| | schließlich | (German) |
| | loppujen lopuksi | (Finnish) |
| | lõppude lõpuks | (Estonian) |
| | végére | (Hungarian) |
| | konec konců | (Czech) |

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| w końcu | (Polish) |
| afinal (de contas) | (Portuguese) |
| ao final | (Galician) |
| 毕竟 | (Chinese) |
| b. after all | (English) |
| après tout | (French) |
| dopotutto | (Italian) |
| después de todo | (Spanish) |

The above is only an informal collection of translational equivalents; I do not know whether they all function in exactly the same way as *after all* does in English. However, comparisons have been attempted and according to some authors, the behavior of equivalents of *after all* is the same as in English. For example, according to Roulet (1990) the French *après tout* also serves to convey the concessive and justification senses:

- (20) a. Je vais aller me promener; **après tout**, j'en ai assez d'écrire. (ex. 11, p.339)
 'I'll go for a walk, after all I'm tired of writing.'
 b. **Après tout**, c'est un film intéressant = Je vous concède que c'est un film intéressant. (Roulet 1990: 342)
 'After all, it's an interesting film = I concede that it's an interesting film.'

Even if the two senses are not typically conveyed by the above equivalents of *after all* in all languages, one can speculate that it is still possible to use the expressions above with both senses. In Polish, for example, *w końcu* is most often used with the justificative sense, it can appear in a concessive clause, as in:

- (21) A więc **w końcu** to prawda!
 'And so after all it's true!'

In fact, it seems that many more expressions can attach to the two rhetorical relations. The following are examples of phrases that can signal the two rhetorical stances of the speaker.

- (22) a. *After all / ultimately / in the end / after all's said and done / at the end of the day*
 b. *W końcu / koniec końcem / koniec końców / ostatecznie / w ostateczności*

7. Conclusions

When discussing the role of discourse markers, Levinson remarked that “what they seem to do is indicate, often in very complex ways, just how the utterance that contains them is a response to, or a continuation of, some portion of the prior discourse.” (Levinson 1983: 87-8). It seems that in the case of at least some markers, like *after all*, there is little need to indicate the relation between utterances. Instead, *after all* acts as an intensifying marker: its presence in the host clause presupposes a logical link between two ideas and puts it in bolder relief. It suggests a special kind of a concessive relation, stressing the extraordinary nature of the highlighted circumstance which is valid despite overwhelming odds to the contrary. In the case of the justificative use, it attaches considerable importance to the assertion made in the host clause.

These meanings probably needed little conventionalization. Both ‘strengthening an existing assumption’ and ‘leading to the contradiction and elimination of an existing assumption’ are compatible with the grammatical meaning of temporal placement and therefore form an intuitive meaning almost to the point of obviating conventionalization.

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