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Ja Doch!

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Meine Damen und Herren: die Sprache! Sie ist ja ein Wunderwerk, vom geringsten Worte zum gewichtigsten Gefüge. Verbindet Sie doch uns alle, den nobelsten wie den gewöhnlichsten Manne, mit Gott selbst. Und ja doch auch mit den Weibern.

Kevin von Humboldt (1771–1842)

Kevin von Humboldt, younger brother of Wilhelm and Alexander, is certainly the least remembered of the brothers Humboldt, so much so that many scholars seem to dispute his very existence.¹ Yet, KvonH. ('Keven Aitch'), as he liked to be called, was on to something his brothers weren't: that small words are every bit as important as the biggest sentence. And his own usage in the above quote gives us a clear indication of which small words he was most fond of: <ja> and <doch>. What better way then, to honor reknown Kevinologist and linguistic Particularist Hans Martin Prinzhorn than with a treatise on KvonH's favorite particles.

The meaning of discourse particles like <ja> and <doch> in German has been the subject of intense research during the past decade and a half. In this paper I would like to propose and explore a particular, I believe novel, meaning for the particles <ja> and <doch>.

1. <Ja>

Starting with <ja>, my proposal is given in (1).

- (1) **ja p** signals that speaker and addressee are
- in an equally good epistemic position to utter **p**, and
 - equally liable to draw joint attention to *p* (the content of **p**)

¹Despite clear indications to the contrary in Alexander's diary ('wieder Skat unter Brüdern gekloppt') and Wilhelm's address to the Prussian Academy ('back when we Humboldt brothers were still touring the South as a skiffle trio').

(1) expresses the USE CONDITIONS (or FELICITY CONDITIONS) for sentences with *<ja>*. Speaking loosely, speaker and addressee must both believe *p* (position) and be ready to assert *p* (are liable to).

1.1 Basic concepts and cases

It should be evident how (1) relates to the common observation that *<ja>* serves as a **marker of old or uncontroversial information**: if speaker and addressee are in position to propose to assert a proposition *p*, they both must be aware (or convinced) that *p*. Conversely, *<ja>* is infelicitous where obviously the addressee does not share the belief that *p* and is thus *a fortiori* not about to assert it:²

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| (2) | Q: Who won? | (3) | A: That's a rabbit. |
| | A: #Peter hat ja gewonnen.
Peter has JA won
'Peter won.' | | B: #Nein, das ist ja ein Hase.
No that is JA a hare
'No, that's a hare.' |

What is perhaps less clear is what I mean by 'draw joint attention to *p*': if speaker and addressee already believe that *p*, isn't *p* by definition part of their joint attention?

I would like to suggest that there are at least two ways in which a mutually believed proposition can still be brought to joint attention. First, the participants may not be aware that they both believe *p*; more precisely, given what (1) states, the speaker assumes the addressee is not aware that *p* is a mutual belief. For example, if the speaker just found out a (not so secret³) secret of the addressee's:

- (4) [D, skimming through the Kippenberger catalogue, to M]
Du wirst ja in diesem Buch erwähnt!!
you become JA in this book mentioned
'Hey, you're mentioned in this book.'

Second, *p* might in fact be a public and mutual belief, but not have been paid attention to in the present conversation. That is, I assume there to be a subset of the Common Ground (the set of mutually held beliefs), namely those propositions which are mutually realized to

²Exx. (8b/c) from Zimmermann (2011), translation corrected; note that B's reply in (3) is possible to the extent that A had previously agreed that the object in question was a hare, e.g. if A is a child.

³If it is a secret the addressee is not likely to want to share, the use of *<ja>* is infelicitous. Thus, if I just deduced that you are the UNA bomber, and hence that you are probably about to kill me, adding *<ja>* to my utterance of (i) makes me sound blissfully unaware of the seriousness of my situation:

- (i) Du bist (# ja) der UNA Bomber!
you are JA the UNA bomber

This is, I would argue, because the addressee is, or at least was, prior to my utterance, not disposed towards entering that proposition to the JABs, defined in (5), even though they were of course epistemically perfectly equipped to.

be currently relevant to the conversation, that is, on which reasoning relevant to the present conversational goals should be based. Let us call these JOINTLY ATTENDED-TO BELIEFS, or JABs for short.

- (5) The JOINTLY ATTENDED-TO BELIEFS (JABs) are those propositions which are taken (by all participants) to be relevant premises for reasoning at the present point in the conversation

Crucially, something might be mutually known (and known to be known), yet not have been recognized as relevant to the issue at hand, so not a JAB.

While JABs are admittedly tailored with an eye towards modelling the meaning of <ja> and its kin, I do not feel too guilty for using such a notion. It seems to me that, once we agree that it is in principle possible to felicitously ‘re-assert’ (or reassure ourselves of) a mutually believed fact —with or without particles like <ja>/<doch>—, some distinction between shared public beliefs (the Common Ground) and ‘beliefs currently in play’ (my JABs) has to be made. Asserting a <ja> sentence is a particularly apt way to get a proposition from the former to the latter.

I should point out that, even if I am correct in claiming that everybody needs to admit some distinction between the Common Ground and what I call JABs here, this does not automatically entail the analysis for <ja> proposed above. I am not claiming that it is part of the lexical meaning of <ja> that it transfers, as it were, a proposition from the Common Ground to the JABs; rather, (1) says that both speaker and addressee are, in short, ready to do so. This will become crucial later on. The reader should also note that (1) just states the particular conditions that <ja> adds to an assertion of *p*. In asserting <ja p> the speaker moreover does add *p* to the JABs, just as they would by asserting plain <p>.

1.2 Surprise <ja>

One crucial aspect that sets (1) apart from similar suggestions in the literature is that it has no trouble with the so-called SURPRISE USE of <ja>, illustrated in (6).

- (6) a. Du bist ja wieder da!
 you are JA again there
 ‘You’re back!’
- b. Na so was. Die Tür ist ja offen!
 PRT such what the door is JA open
 ‘Go figure! The door is open.’

Such uses have been seen as problematic for the view that <ja> is essentially a marker of known information. But I think there is a straightforward response to that: utterances of the sentences in (6) are indeed only felicitous if their propositional content is verifiable by both the speaker and the addressee. (6b) for example is infelicitous if the speaker is talking to a remote addressee on the phone. That is to say, even though such sentences can

express acknowledgement or even surprise that p is the case, they cannot be used to *inform* someone that p . This is why $\langle ja \rangle$ is possible in such contexts, even though it does not serve as a reminder.

This brings us to a question, though: if p is not only known, but even paid attention to by the addressee already at the time of utterance (i.e. it is among the JABs; and how wouldn't it be, given that they just discovered it), then what is the point of asserting yet again that p ?

But crucially, this question is entirely independent of $\langle ja \rangle$: (6) could equally well be uttered *without* $\langle ja \rangle$ in the joint discovery scenario. The effect, in either case, is to express the speaker's surprise. I will not speculate on why that is so, but simply note it as the SURPRISE AXIOM: asserting p when p is obvious to all at the time of utterance has the effect of expressing speaker's surprise at p .⁴

With this in mind, let us look at a slightly trickier example of the surprise use of $\langle ja \rangle$:

- (7) Du bist ja verletzt!
 you are JA injured
 'Jeez, you're injured!'

(7) may be used to draw the addressee's attention to the fact that they are injured, seemingly in violation of the epistemic clause (a) of (1). I submit, though, that the speaker is in fact behaving linguistically as though the addressee *were* aware of p (and hence about to assert it). One could call this an instance of *flouting* the use conditions of $\langle ja \rangle$, perhaps for reasons of politeness: without $\langle ja \rangle$, the utterance would clearly indicate that one takes the addressee to be ignorant of p .

In support of this idea, note first that there is, again, a clear aspect of mutual knowledge in this use. If the addressee weren't in a position to verify p , such an utterance would be infelicitous. If A opens B's mail and finds a notification that B won the lottery, A cannot inform B by saying (8).

- (8) [opening your mail] Du hast (# ja) die Lotterie gewonnen.
 you have JA the lottery won
 'You won the lottery!'

⁴It is also due to the Surprise Axiom that it sounds strange to express a joint discovery about oneself, as in (i):

- (i) [upon entering the room] Ich bin (# ja) wieder da.
 I am JA again here
 '(Wow,) I'm here again.'

With $\langle ja \rangle$, (i) seems felicitous only if, say, the speaker had just been unexpectedly teleported back from a remote location.

The reason (i)—unlike (6a)—does not express surprise *without* $\langle ja \rangle$ is of course that (i)—unlike (6a)—could also be used to *inform* the addressee that p .

In fact, the felicity of such informing uses already declines, it seems to me, if the addressee is presumed to not have been aware of *p* before, cf. (9).

- (9) Man hat Dir (#ja) ein ‘Hau mich!’ Schild auf den Rücken geklebt!
 one has you JA a ‘Hit Me!’ sign on the back taped
 ‘They taped a ‘Hit Me!’ sign to your back.’

On the other hand, merely assuming that the addressee *might* be aware that *p* is not a sufficient condition for using <*ja*>. While this would directly explain (7) (as well as the alternative utterance of <*Du bist verletzt. Wusstest du das?*> or <*Weißt du, dass du verletzt bist?*>, ‘Did you know that you’re injured?’), it wrongly predicts (8) to be as natural as (10), which it clearly isn’t.

- (10) a. Du hast die Lotterie gewonnen. Wusstest du das?
 you have the lottery won knew you that
 ‘You won the lottery, did you know that?’
 b. Weisst du, dass du die Lotterie gewonnen hast?
 know you that you the lottery won have
 ‘Are you aware that you won the lottery?’

Similarly, that the addressee is in a position to directly verify that *p* after the utterance—which would also explain (7)—cannot be sufficient as the same would go for (9): once told, the addressee would be in a privileged position to verify and assert that they have said sign on their back.

Thus it seems to me that the best analysis, even of cases like (7), is to assume that the speaker is presenting *p* as something the addressee is aware of, even if they are not convinced that the addressee really is.

1.3 No <*ja*> in repetitions

The suggested meaning for <*ja*> also goes some way towards explaining an otherwise curious fact about its distribution, namely that it cannot be used for confirmations:

- (11) A: Wir gehen durch dick und dünn!
 we go through thick and thin
 B: (Jawoll!) Wir gehen (# ja) durch dick und dünn!
 indeed we go JA though thick and thin
 ‘Indeed! Through thick and thin!’

Why should this be so if <*ja*> merely marked information as already shared? If, on the other hand, part of <*ja*>’s meaning is that the addressee (i.e. A in (11)) is equally likely to assert the proposition so marked, it is clear why this cannot work in (11): A is *not* likely

to confirm their own statement by repeating it (nevermind that epistemically they are of course in a position to).⁵

2. <Doch>

It is regularly suggested that <doch> is basically <ja> plus some sense of contrariety; both share the element of common or previous knowledge. I would like to suggest a variant of this approach against the background of the meaning of <ja> proposed in (1), as given in (12).

- (12) **doch p** signals that speaker and addressee are
- a. in an equally good epistemic position to utter **p**, and
 - b. the addressee is not about to add *p* to their JABs (though they could)⁶

2.1 Basic cases: corrective reminder

(12) accounts straightforwardly for the most common—or, at any rate, most discussed—use of <doch>, the ‘corrective reminder’, illustrated in (13).

- (13) A: Tina könnte heute auf die Kinder aufpassen.
 ‘Tina could watch the kids tonight.’
- B: Tina ist doch im Urlaub.
 T. is DOCH in vacation
 ‘(But) Tina is on vacation.’

Taking into consideration that Tina is on vacation, A wouldn’t have made the suggestion in (13): B’s utterance entails the falsity of (an implication of) A’s. But, unlike in other approaches (Egg 2010, Repp 2013), this is not part of the lexical meaning of <doch> proposed here. A chain of reasoning has to apply first: A (in (13)) believes *p* to be true (meaning of <doch>, in particular (12a)), *p* is relevant to the problem at hand (else B wouldn’t assert it), which means that somehow A must be behaving as though they are not considering *p*

⁵Things are different if the first utterance already contains <ja>.

- (i) A: Da bist du ja schon wieder! B: Da bin ich ja schon wieder.
 there are you JA already again there am I JA already again
 ‘There you are again! — There I am again.’

In this case, it seems to me that B is essentially making their utterance in parallel to A’s, not as a reply to A’s. Accordingly, <ja> in B’s utterance is not licensed because of A’s utterance, but by the common ground *prior* to that. All participants were equally likely to utter *p* previous to A’s utterance, and they all do so, independently, as it were, of each other.

⁶The addition in parentheses is meant to enforce the presupposition of ‘add’, namely that *p* is not among the JABs already. Note that if <doch> is used in a declarative, this will follow automatically, since the point of the speaker’s utterance is to add *p* to the JABs.

already, which, *a fortiori* implies that A is not about to introduce *p* to the JABs. Note that *<doch>*, on this account, does not add much to the content of B's utterance, except for the implication that A, too, would have been in a position to assert *p*; this seems reasonable, given that a reply without *<doch>* —*<Tina ist im Urlaub>*— would be equally felicitous here, except that it does not insist (though it allows) that A also was aware of *p*.

In contradistinction, replacing *<doch>* with *<ja>* in (13) jeopardizes felicity:

(14) A: Tina könnte heute auf die Kinder aufpassen.
'Tina could watch the kids tonight.'

B: Tina ist ja im Urlaub.

T. is JA in vacation

'(You know,) Tina is on vacation.'

B's reply in (14) seems to convey agreement with A's suggestion, as though the content of B's reply were supporting it. This directly follows from clause b. of *<ja>*'s meaning in (1): speaker and addressee are equally liable to enter *p* into their JABs. If this were the case, then A would have to see the fact that Tina is on vacation as supporting their proposal that she watch the kids; or at the very least they should see the same relevance of it to the issue at hand as speaker B (e.g. the kids are where Tina vacations).⁷

2.2 Topic broaching uses of *<doch>*

(12) is sufficiently weak to encompass a different use of *<doch>*, which can be found, among other places, discourse initially.

(15) Du hast doch so eine Akku-Bohrmaschine...
you have DOCH such a battery powered drill
'You own a battery powered drill, don't you?'

The utterer of (15) is entering a mutually known proposition into the JABs. In fact, they might have used *<ja>* instead of *<doch>* in the same situation (though to my ears a wee bit less felicitously). But crucially, the use of *<doch>* signals that there is no expectation at all that the addressee would have seen this coming, as it were. The speaker is broaching a new topic (say, maybe: can I borrow your drill?) by way of introducing a known fact. As a matter of politeness, they signal that the fact is not new, as well as the fact that there is no expectation that the addressee would have been expected to bring up the matter.

⁷A popular strategy in the literature is to leave the corresponding aspect of *<doch>*'s meaning to implicature: by not explicitly signalling that we are in a situation in which the addressee wouldn't utter *p* (which could have been done by using *<doch>* instead of *<ja>*), I (the speaker) implicate that we *are* (not not) in a situation in which the addressee would utter *p*. Put yet more simply, the opposite of *<doch>*'s 'the speaker isn't about to enter *p* into the JABs' gets added to the meaning of *<ja>* by implicature.

I feel that this line of argument puts too much burden on conventionalized pragmatics, which is why I directly added clause b. to (12).

2.3 Informative ('surprise') <doch>

Similar to the surprise <ja> uses from sec. 1.2, there are uses of <doch> in utterances which seem to track a joint discovery, rather than a reminder to the addressee, such as those in (16).

- (16) [discussing what a third party said earlier]
- a. Der führt doch was im Schilde!
he leads DOCH what in the shield
'He's up to something!'
 - b. Hier/ Da stimmt doch was nicht.
here there tunes DOCH what not
'Something about this doesn't feel right.'

According to <doch>'s meaning in (12), these should mean that the addressee has the same epistemic basis for uttering the sentences as the speaker, but isn't about to. Clearly, like the parallel <ja> sentences, those in (16) require that the addressee, too, can verify *p* to the same degree that the speaker can: uttered in a non-reminder context, the speaker either comments on some feature of the joint speech situation, or on something the addressee previously said. <Doch>'s meaning that the addressee isn't about to utter *p* here leads to an implication of conjecture: *p* is not a compulsory conclusion from the mutually accessible facts. Either its relevance is not beyond doubt (in which case the addressee, though aware of it, may not see the need to utter it), or its validity is less firm (in which case the addressee might be more hesitant to go out on a limb, as it were, by asserting that *p*).

I think this characterizes fairly well the difference between (16) and the parallel <ja> sentences in (17) (when uttered in a non-reminder scenario), which sound much more like 'we're just discovering this simultaneously', their naturalness increasing the more *p* describes something that has been considered as a possible outcome all along.

- (17) a. Der führt ja was im Schilde!
b. Hier stimmt ja was nicht.

3. <Doch> in non-declaratives

This section argues that <doch> scopes over the sentence type of its host sentence, by observing the effects it has in non-declaratives. To the best of my knowledge, <ja>, at least when unstressed, is restricted to declaratives and so won't play a role in this section.

3.1 <Doch> in adhortatives

The proposed meaning for <doch> also shows up in sentence types other than declaratives, and looking at those turns out to be quite instructive. Take (18), from Karagjosova (2004; her (4.7), p.82).

- (18) A: Nur Dienstag oder Mittwoch ginge für mich in Ordnung.
 only Tuesday and Wednesday went for me in order
 ‘Only Tuesday or Wednesday would work for me.’
- B: Nehmen wir doch den Dienstag.
 take we DOCH the Tuesday
 ‘Let’s take Tuesday, then.’

Adding <doch> to an adhortative like in (18B) gives it a more jovial, suggestive feel. I would like to argue that the speaker, B, in this case expresses that the addressee, A, has as much reason to suggest ‘Let’s meet on Tuesday’ as the speaker (which, since A did in no way urge Tuesday over Wednesday, must not be a strong preference). In addition, A is *not* in fact expected to utter it, since they obviously delegated the decision to B (hence it would be odd to use <ja> here).

Particularly instructive in this connection is the contrast between (18B) and (19B), which is my concoction (as an alternative reply to (18A)).

- (19) B: Wir nehmen (# doch) den Dienstag.
 we take DOCH the Tuesday
 ‘Tuesday it is, then!’

While (19B) without <doch> makes for a perfectly fine (and not overly authoritative) reply, addition of <doch> is infelicitous (unless one accommodates that A should know that Tuesday was already agreed upon). Why should this be, given that (18B) and (19B) appear to convey the same proposition?

I would like to propose that, while (18B) implies that A would equally likely have made the *suggestion* to pick Tuesday, (19B) implies that A would equally likely have *decided* to meet Tuesday. Now, if B *suggests* to meet on Tuesday, as in (18B), they could coherently and with the same confidence suggest Wednesday, so the use of <doch> in B is compatible with an equal preference for Tuesday and Wednesday by A and by B. B *picking* Tuesday in (19B), on the other hand, means they are *not* picking Wednesday, so the implication added by <doch> is that A would have equally likely picked Tuesday; but that is clearly not the case in the scenario in (18).

On the other hand, (18B) cannot possibly be understood as indicating what (19B) does: that A should have known we are on for Tuesday. Why is that? Simply because, I would argue, suggestions are generally odd as reminders: If A and B had agreed on Tuesday before the dialogue in (18), it would be odd for B to say <Nehmen wir den Dienstag>.⁸ Adding <doch> would only aggravate this, by indicating on top that not just B, but also A could have ‘re-made’ that suggestion.

⁸Or rather: it would signal that B chooses to pretend there was no prior setting of the meeting time, maybe so as to not remind A again of their declining memory.

If this line of reasoning is correct, it points to an important fact about the semantics of *<doch>*: that it scopes over the sentence type. (18B) and (19B) quite arguably express the same proposition, that we will take Tuesday; but (19B) asserts it, while (18B) suggests it. Accordingly, *<doch>* in (18B) expresses that the addressee could equally well have suggested it, but wasn't about to, while (18B) expresses that the addressee could equally well have asserted it (but wasn't about to).

3.2 *<Doch>* in imperatives

<Doch> works especially well in imperatives used as offers or suggestions (rather than orders):

- (20) a. Setzen Sie sich doch!
 sit you self DOCH
 ‘Have a seat!’
- b. Ruf sie doch an!
 call her DOCH on
 ‘Call her, why don’t you!’

This makes sense if one thinks that the content of an imperative is essentially a deontically modalized proposition (Kaufmann 2012): you, too, want to sit down (but couldn't make that suggestion, since it's *my* office); you, too, know you should call her (but won't say that, because you are too shy to).

Even most imperatives used as directives tolerate *<doch>*, which adds a flavor of ‘it is in your best interest (after all)’: deep down you know that you should do this (but you weren't going to).

- (21) a. [police chase] Bleiben Sie (doch) stehen.
 remain you DOCH stand
 ‘Stop (for crissake)!’
- b. Sei (doch) still!
 be DOCH quiet
 ‘Shut up (already)!’

On the other hand, using *<doch>* would be impossible if the police officer wanted to warn an unsuspecting passer-by against walking into a crime scene, or for you to hush a friend when you just realize that the enemy is listening: in neither case is the addressee aware of the necessity to stop/shut up (much less to say so).⁹

⁹There is a subtlety here which I cannot fully address at this point: the use of *<doch>* really implies that the addressee knows ‘I *ought to* to this’ rather than just ‘I am *required* to do this’, i.e. the modal background seems to have to be *buletic*; only in this way does the ‘you know you should’ implication follow. My sense is that this should ultimately be related to the fact that self-directed imperatives like *<Bin ich mal nicht so!>* oder *<Seien wir großzügig!>* —roughly: ‘Let’s not be that way/be generous’— can never express an ‘external’ requirement. I have to leave further exploration of this for a future occasion.

Additionally, of course, even if the requirement *is* in fact known, <doch> is only possible if there is reason to assume that the addressee is not presently aware that it is relevant; this leads to an implication that the addressee has violated the requirement. This goes without saying in the examples in (21), but makes itself felt in (22).

- (22) [mountain climber to another] Schau (doch) nicht nach unten!
 look DOCH not to down
 ‘Don’t look down!’/‘Don’t be looking down!’

<Doch> adds to (22) an, otherwise absent, implication that the addressee just did, or is about to, look down.

For this reason, the only class of imperatives that categorically disallow <doch> are general rules and orders.¹⁰

- (23) a. [sign in zoo] Klopfen Sie (# doch) nicht an die Scheibe!
 knock you DOCH not on the glass
 ‘Don’t knock on the glass!’
 b. [highway sign]
 Bleiben Sie (# doch) rechts von der durchgezogenen Linie.
 stay you DOCH right of the solid line
 ‘Stay to the right of the solid line!’

There is, as in the case of exhortatives, an instructive contrast with declaratives used directionally. Without <doch>, (24) can be used interchangeably with (21b) to shut up an adversary addressee, whereas adding <doch> makes (24) incoherent (in contradistinction to (21b)).

- (24) DU bist (# doch) still!
 you are DOCH quiet
 ‘You, shut up!’

The difference, I would like to suggest, is that (21b) with <doch> says, by clause (12a), that the addressee is epistemically ready to order themselves to shut up, which means they know that they should (‘you know you should shut up, but you won’t’; the addressee might not in fact think so, but that, at any rate, is what the speaker insinuates by using <doch>). (24), on the other hand, says, that the addressee is epistemically ready to *assert* that they are, or will be, quiet (#‘you know you’re shutting up, but you won’t’).¹¹

¹⁰Signs may contain <doch>, as long as they express weaker modalities than obligation:

- (i) [billboard] Lassen Sie doch mal so richtig die Seele baumeln.
 let you DOCH once so real the soul dangle
 ‘Unwind completely!’

¹¹Generally, if one expected the addressee to not just know, but be ready to *concede* the point, one wouldn’t use an imperative; this would motivate why <ja> is generally odd to use in imperatives.

4. <Ja>/<doch>

I have opted in this paper for meanings of <ja> and <doch> which make them incompatible: <ja p> implies that the addressee is liable to say **p**, <doch p> implies that they aren't. In certain cases, however, it seems that the two particles are interchangeable:

- (25) Ich geh (ja / doch) schon!
 I go JA DOCH already
 'I'm already gone.'

(25) could be uttered, for example, if your class starts right after mine ends, and I see you enter the class room, while I am still talking to students. Without particles, I can use it to acknowledge that I saw you and to inform you that I will be out of here momentarily, as per our agreement. Adding the particles, however, adds a note of annoyance. It would be unjustified if you just entered with a smile on your face; it suggests that you said something like <Are you still in here?!>, or are deliberately making excessive noise etc.

Since this effect occurs with both <ja> and <doch> it must be connected to their shared meaning component, namely that you are in an equally good epistemic position (as I am) to assert that I am leaving. Since there is no sense of surprise connected to (25) even with the particles, this cannot be a joint discovery scenario, so it must be that you previously knew that I would leave when you arrive.

Now for the case of <ja>, we get a further implication that you were about to say that I am leaving; this is the source of the annoyance flavor: I am implying that you were about to remind me to leave. Things don't improve with <doch>, because now I express that you will *not* assert *p*, and that it is not in our JABs, that is, something in your behavior indicates that you forgot about *p*.

Although a very similar effect arises in either case, and <ja> and <doch> seem equally felicitous, I believe there is a slight difference nevertheless, in that <doch> suggests more strongly that there was something in your behavior pushing me to leave. If you did nothing of the sort, <ja> may seem unjustified, but <doch> is, to my ear, borderline infelicitous. Similarly in (26):

- (26) a. Das geb ich doch / ja zu!
 that give I DOCH JA to
 'Look, I admit that!'
 b. Das weiß ich ja / doch.
 that know I JA DOCH
 'Don't you think I know that?'

While the use of <ja> suggests that your inquiry wouldn't have been necessary, <doch> actually implies that you made a mistake in thinking that I do not admit to it/know it. I think this jibes well with the reasoning above.

5. Summary and outlook

In this squib I suggested a new meaning for the particles <ja> and <doch> and outlined how it could account for some of their various uses. The main innovation, I think, is that <ja/doch> do not primarily relate to the knowledge of the participants, but to their disposition to utter something. Ultimately I would think that the a-conditions (about the participants' epistemic state) should be reducible to this, as the special status of the JABs would be, hopefully, but this has to await a future occasion. Your 70th birthday for example.

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