

## **Pragmatic and discursive aspects of German modal particles: a corpus-based approach**

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Modal particles fulfil important pragmatic and discursive functions in German. Their meaning is complex and highly dependent on linguistic as well as situational features of the context. Following the premise that German modal particles occur with greater frequency in the spoken language, the paper reports on an analysis which is based on corpora representing spoken German. The concept of 'spoken language' is discussed critically with regard to the corpora chosen for analysis and narrowed down concerning the use of modal particles.

The analysis is based on the following corpora: Freiburger Korpus, Dialogstrukturenkorpus and Pfeffer-Korpus, which are all kept at the "Institute for the German Language" (Institut für deutsche Sprache) and can be accessed via the institute's on-line system COSMAS. In addition, a collection of telephone conversations (Brons-Albert 1984) was scanned into computer readable files and analysed with MicroConcord (Scott and Johns 1993). A quantitative analysis was carried out on all corpora; the qualitative analysis was limited to the telephone conversations.

With regard to these analyses, the paper discusses:

- the realization of the concept of 'spoken language' in the corpora under discussion
- the limitations of computer-based analysis for the language feature investigated
- collocational patterns which help to identify pragmatic and discursive functions of modal particles

### **References**

Brons-Albert R 1984 *Gesprochenes Standarddeutsch: Telefondialoge*. Tübingen:Günter Narr

Institut für deutsche Sprache 1999 COSMAS. <http://www.ids-mannheim.de/kt/cosmas.html>

Scott M, Johns T 1993 *MicroConcord*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.