Discourse Particles in *Wh*-Questions
Two experimental investigations of German *denn*

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Discourse particles (a.k.a. modal particles) have been an important topic of linguistic research, especially in German. In sharp contrast to this, they played close to no role in language processing research so far. Since discourse particles belong to the "expressive" dimension of meaning, information about their on-line semantic integration should be of vital interest. In this talk, we concentrate on the syntax and processing of question-sensitive discourse particles as they arise in *wh*-questions. We explore the dependence of the discourse particle *denn* (lit. 'then') on interrogative force as well as its dependence on syntactic locality. Since judgments are occasionally murky, we present first a Magnitude Estimation study. The results set the stage for an EEG study. Unlicensed *denn* leads to enhanced processing cost when compared to short adverbs which do not rely on licensing by interrogative force. Some of the processing costs are reflected in enhanced P600 shifts, normally associated with attempts at syntactic integration.