

**EVIDENTIAL MARKERS FUNCTIONING  
ON HIGHER LEVEL EXPLICATURE:  
THE CASE OF *JA* AND *WOHL* IN GERMAN**

**Regina Blass**

*S.I.L. and University of Niamey  
P.O. Box 10151, Niamey, Niger*

Wilson and Sperber (1993) and Ifanditou (1994), analyse evidential adverbials and particles as phenomena functioning on Higher Level Explicature. Procedural constraints on Higher Level Explicature with an evidential use are to be found in German. With *ja* and *wohl*, German has procedural constraints on Higher Level Explicatures which indicate that the speaker as well as the hearer have evidence for the content of the proposition expressed. The evidence can be explained in terms of Sperber and Wilson's notion of mutual manifestness. *Ja* and *wohl* have traditionally been analysed as modal particles. By considering most of their uses as evidential procedural, they become more clearly defined in an explanatory way, distinguishing them clearly from the other German modal particles. Moreover, they shed further light on the as yet little studied area of the procedural function in language.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Relevance Theory, Particles, German, *ja*, *wohl*, Constraints, Mutual Manifestness, Higher Level Explicature,

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Palmer (1986:56), there are two different systems of epistemic modality found in the languages of the world: judgements and evidentials. Judgements involve speculation and deduction: evidentials include perpectives and quotatives (hearsay) devices (e.g. particles

and morphological marking). This fits well with the widespread view that there are three types of propositions expressible in language. For example, Givón (1982:24) proposes the following classification:

- ‘Propositions which are taken for granted, via the force of diverse conventions, as unchallengeable by the hearer and thus requiring no evidentiary justification by the speaker.’
- ‘Propositions that are asserted with relative confidence, are open to challenge by the hearer and thus require - or admit - evidentiary justification.’
- ‘Propositions that are asserted with doubt as hypotheses and are thus beneath both challenge and evidentiary substantiation.’

Type 1 propositions are usually described as declaratives; type 2 as evidentials; type 3 as judgements.

Palmer suggests that there are two grammatical systems of epistemic modality. Some languages, like English, have a system only of judgements: apparently Tuyuca (Barnes 1984) has only evidentials. Other languages have a mixture of judgements and evidentials: Palmer refers to Inga (Levinsohn (1975:14-15)) and German. Consider (1), an example from Inga:

(1) - nis pununcuna-mi  
there they-slept-AFF  
'There they slept.'

- chipica diablo-char ca  
there evil-DED it-was  
'A devil was presumably there.'

- chacapi-si yallinacú  
on-bridge-REP they-were-crossing  
'They were crossing on the bridge.'

The German example (3) that Palmer mentions is taken from the verbal system:

(2) Er ist in die Schweiz gegangen. ‘He has gone to Switzerland’.  
(3) Er soll in die Schweiz gegangen sein. ‘Apparently, he has gone to Switzerland’

The term ‘evidential’ came into being because of the phenomena found in languages of South America and Australia of the type that Barnes and Levinsohn mention. Barnes describes a pure system of evidentials, which she calls ‘visual’, ‘non-visual’, ‘apparent’, ‘second-hand’ and ‘assumed’.

Ifanditou (1994), using the framework of Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986) argues against a limited view where evidentials should be exclusively used for constructions which linguistically encode information about the speaker’s degree of commitment. She shows that sentence adverbials in English such as ‘obviously’, parenthetical constructions such as ‘I think’, and hearsay expressions such as ‘allegedly’ are evidential expressions which can only be properly identified by considerations of inference. Following Wilson and Sperber (1990, 1993) she analyses the above evidential adverbials and parentheticals as conceptual

phenomena functioning on Higher Level Explicature, such as 'The speaker thinks that P....'. Wilson and Sperber (1990, 1993) suggest that there are also procedural constraints on Higher Level Explicature. They give as one example, the question marker *ti* used in some dialects of French.

My claim in this paper will be that the so-called modal particles *ja* and *wohl* are in some of their functions evidential constraints on higher level explicature, while stressed *wohl* will be analysed as a conceptual marker functioning on higher level explicature. The evidence for *ja* and unstressed *wohl* is based on mutual manifestness. The evidence can be recovered by perception, hearsay and deduction. The latter would not fall into Palmer's classification of evidentials but judgement. In line with Ifantidu I will show that inference plays a big role in the understanding of evidentials, which necessarily changes Palmer's categories.

Under 2, I will discuss some of the traditional analyses on *ja* and *wohl*, their modal and non-modal use, especially as found in the German literature. Under 3, I propose an analysis within Relevance theory, by giving a brief introduction to RT in 3.1. I discuss the notion of Mutual Manifestness in 3.2. and in 3.3. the notion of Higher Level Explicature. I will discuss then how conceptual markers and procedural constraints function on this level. In 3.4. I analyse texts from the news magazine 'Der Spiegel' with *ja* and *wohl* within RT and try to explain why the speaker needs the evidence.

## 2. TRADITIONAL VIEWS ON *JA* AND *WOHL*

### 2.1 *Uses of ja*

Traditionally *ja* has been differentiated by syntactic category and types of words in three variants (Foolen in Weydt, 1989:312):

- *Ja* as a sentential equivalent or an answering particle.  
(4) A: Kommst Du? 'Are you coming?'  
B: *Ja* 'Yes'
- *Ja* as what Foolen calls a focus particle:  
(5) Peter ist sehr begabt, *ja* er ist ein Genie. 'Peter is very gifted, *if not* a genius.'
- *Ja* as a modal particle has three main uses:  
In imperative sentences:  
(6) Nimm *ja* die Bleistifte nicht mit. 'Do not dare take the pencils with you'.

In exclamations:

(7) Deine Stirn ist *ja* ganz heiß. 'Your forehead is hot.'

In assertions:

(8) Wir leben *ja* im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert 'As you know, we live in the twentieth century'.

In the present paper I want to consider the so-called modal particle uses only, since they have a related evidential use. Foolen tries to express a general meaning for all uses of *ja*, in its modal and non-modal use as follows: (Translation from German my own) ‘*Ja* means in a abstract way Affirmation ‘it is true’. It indicates a positive relationship between an utterance and the world or a system of knowledge (discourse)...’. This may be true for all uses if one understands the imperative use in a very abstract way as affirming, making emphatic, ones warning. Historically one can perhaps consider such a common meaning, and it would be interesting to show the developments of the various conceptual and particle uses. However a synchronic analysis does not provide one theoretical umbrella yet for all uses of the particle. But what about the modal use. Is there a common umbrella?

The assertive and exclamative use of *ja* would not be adequately explained if it was only in terms of Affirmation. Abraham (1991:217), Doherty (1987:101) and Lindner (1991:170-81) express in a similar way Hentschel’s (1983) description of the function of *ja*: (Translation from German my own) ‘.. *ja* expresses that certain states of affairs are right or true. It is presupposed that the hearer knows or has the opportunity to get to know the states of affairs.’ No one seems to find a proper model which can account for this phenomenon. Doherty suggests that, in using *ja* the speaker implies (conventionally) that it is possible for the hearer to know the states of affairs in question. Thus she formulates a meaning postulate (1987:101) which is based on knowledge.

Lindner (1991:173) notices that ‘know’ is too strong, because it cannot handle an exclamation like (9):

(9) Ich habe *ja* gewonnen. ‘I have won’

where neither the speaker nor the hearer knew anything before the speaker received a certain evidence, such as a letter, phone call etc. by surprise. She tries to improve on Doherty’s proposal by formulating her own postulate. Of the two different postulate versions which she proposed, I will quote the shorter later version: “(P1’) In using MP *ja* the speaker indicates that in his/her eyes the proposition p is not controversial.”

It seems that both postulates do not really express what Hentschel expressed informally, especially as far as the hearer’s part is concerned. It seems even that Lindner’s definition leaves the hearer out completely. Is she trying to imply that what is not controversial for the speaker is not controversial for the hearer either? Numerous statements made by politicians, using *ja* are made to sound confident and uncontroversial, but they may be provocative and controversial for the hearer nevertheless. Consider (10) from “Der Spiegel” No 27/ 1.7.96 out of the discussion with Oskar Lafontaine “Keiner kann gewinnen”, S.22-25

(10) S: Der Ansturm billiger Arbeitskräfte aus Spanien, Portugal und Griechenland beginnt gerade erst. Wie wollen Sie die Billigkonkurrenz stoppen?  
 ‘The storm of cheap labour from Spain, Portugal and Greece has just began. How do you want to stop the cheap competitors?’

L: Jedenfalls nicht durch eine Senkung der deutschen Löhne auf das portugiesische Niveau. Die Befürworter einer solchen Strategie fordern Lohnsenkungen *ja* nie für sich,

sondern immer nur für andere.

‘Under no circumstances by lowering the German wages o the Portugese level. Those who are in agreement with that to demand this lowering *of course* never for themselves.

Lafontaine knows that there are many people, who would not agree with his statement that those people who want to lower wages, do not include themselves. So his statement is highly controversial. So if Doherty’s ‘know’ is not applicable and Lindners ‘not controversial’ cannot always apply to the hearer, then what is the involvement of the hearer that the speaker presupposes the hearer has when *ja* is used? In the next section I will claim that Sperber and Wilson’s notion of Mutual Manifestness explains both the speaker’s and hearer’s involvement better. Before I go on to this subject, I will introduce the particle *wohl*.

## 2.2. *Uses of wohl*

Considering sentential and word class differences, *wohl* has four different uses.

- Noun: with the interpretation ‘health’, ‘well-being’.  
(11) Er ist um ihr *Wohl* besorgt. ‘He is concerned about her well-being’
- Adverb or adjective: with the interpretation ‘totally, well, healthy, pleasant’.  
(12) Er ist *wohl* genährt. ‘He is well nourished’.  
(13) Er fühlt sich nicht *wohl*. ‘He is not well’
- Modal use stressed:  
(14) Er weiß das *wóhl*. ‘He is well aware of this’  
(15) Er hat die Bücher *wóhl* gelesen. ‘He hás read the books’.

Stressed *wóhl* is similar to stressed *schón* in that it works together with contrastive stress (see Abraham 1991:230-2). Like *ja* the speaker is convinced that the propositional content is true. Unlike unstressed *ja* the speaker does not assume that the hearer knows about the propositional content nor that he had the opportunity to get to know it. In fact he believes that the hearers’ assumptions are contradictory to his own.

- Modal use not stressed:  
(16) Du bist *wohl* müde. ‘It seems that you are tired.’

As Abraham 1991:231 points out, this use of *wohl* has no meaning resemblance to examples (12) to (15), while one could see how the stressed *wóhl* developed from the adverbial-adjectival use, no such connection can be traced with unstressed *wohl*. Therefore a minimalistic analysis is not possible.

This *wohl* expresses quite the opposite of the stressed *wóhl*; as far as the truth validation of the proposition expressed is concerned, the proposition is only an assumption (Abraham 1991:231). The difference between *ja* and *wohl* is that the speaker claims with *ja* that he has full evidence for the truth of the proposition expressed, which he believes the hearer can also discover, while in the case of *wohl* he commits himself only to a lower than full degree of evidence, which he also believes the hearer can discover.

So stressed *wóhl* and *ja* are similar in that the speaker commits him or herself to full evidence for the truth of the proposition expressed and *wohl* and *ja* are similar in that the speaker believes the hearer has access to the evidence he commits himself to.

### 3. JA AND WOHL WITHIN RELEVANCE THEORY

#### 3.1. *Introduction to Relevance Theory*

Sperber and Wilson (1986, 1989) treat the interpretation of utterances as a process in two stages: The first stage is modular linguistic decoding which has as output a logical form serving as input to a second central inferential stage. During the second central inferential stage the decoded logical form is contextually enriched in order to construct an hypothesis concerning the informative intention of the speaker.

The inferential comprehension includes the construction and manipulation of the mental representations. Therefore an utterance encodes two fundamental types of information: representational and computational, or descriptive and procedural. From a linguistic point of view many of the cognitive representational constructions are truth-conditional while the cognitive procedural phenomena is often non-truth-conditional. However, as (Wilson and Sperber 1990, 1993) show, these pairings are not always to be found. It is, in fact, possible to find constructions which are truth-conditional from a linguistic point of view and procedural from a cognitive point of view and there are utterances which are non-truth-conditional from a linguistic point of view and representational from a cognitive point of view. I will come back to this under 3.4.

#### 3.2. *Mutual manifestness*

Sperber and Wilson (1986) claim further that an utterance makes manifest a variety of assumptions and the hearer pays attention to all those which are relevant. Ostensive communication communicates a presumption of relevance which is in line with the principle of relevance that all acts of communication communicate their own optimal relevance. Of all the interpretations that the hearer has available he chooses the first interpretation coherent with the principle of relevance. Once the hearer has identified the informative intention of the speaker because of this criterion, the hearer can consider the speaker's intention not only to be manifest, but also mutually manifest.

Sperber and Wilson (1986:39) define manifestness as follows: 'A fact is *manifest* to an individual at a given time if and only if he is capable at that time of representing it mentally and accepting its representation as true or probably true. A *cognitive environment* of an individual is a set of facts that are manifest to him'. Sperber and Wilson explain further: 'To be manifest, then, is to be perceptible or inferable. An individual's total cognitive environment is a function of his physical environment and his cognitive abilities.' What is manifest may not be perceived in the same way by two people, on the other hand the same

facts and assumptions may be manifest in the cognitive environment of two different people. In this case these cognitive environments intersect, and their intersection is a cognitive environment that these two people share. People never share their total cognitive environment, because of differing perception, and difference in previously memorised information due to different experiences. Sperber and Wilson claim further that 'the fact that two people share a cognitive environment does not imply that they make the same assumptions: merely that they are capable of doing so'. They call any shared cognitive environment in which people share a *mutual cognitive environment*. In a mutually cognitive environment every manifest assumption is what they call *mutually manifest*. A mutually manifest assumption is clearly weaker than a mutual assumption. it is possible for two people to have the same assumptions mutually manifest, without actually entertaining them mutually in an interpretation.

It seems that mutual manifestness is what the speaker indicates with the so-called modal *ja*. The speaker, using *ja* assumes that the hearer has all the assumptions manifest that he himself has manifest, in order to derive the same interpretation as the speaker and makes this assumption of mutual manifestness ostensive. The reason for using *ja* is to give the utterance a certain amount of strength that it would not have without the evidence. Consider (17)

(17) A to B. Du blutest *ja*. 'You are bleeding.'

The speaker knows that the blood is mutually manifest by sight. This mutual manifestness provides evidence which makes the utterance have a high degree of strength. In this case the blood was perceptually recognizable and identified because of the assumptions that speaker and hearers have about what blood is like. Sometimes mutual manifestness has to be derived by inference. As Sperber and Wilson say, not only assumptions can be mutually manifest but also conclusions that I may draw from those assumptions. For instance it may be manifest to me, what I had never considered before that Julius Caesar and Noam Chomsky never had breakfast with each other. But because of the assumptions that I have about Caesar and Chomsky this conclusion is manifest. Of course two people can draw the same conclusions from the same manifest assumptions. Consider (18):

(18) A sees B putting clean dishes into the cupboard and says:

A: Du hast *ja* abgewaschen. 'You have done the washing up'.

Here A assumes that B has an assumption (18') available:

(18') If dishes are clean and put into a cupboard they have been washed up.

To both A and B the conclusion is mutually manifest that B did the washing up.

This does not mean that the hearer necessarily *knows* what the speaker knows nor does that mean that the hearer always finds uncontroversial what the speaker utters. Consider the following example:

(19) A. Du hast *ja* einen Sonnenbrand. 'You are sunburned'

B. Das ist *doch* ein Hautausschlag. 'It is not sunburn but a skin disease'.

Here A and B can be said to have a shared cognitive environment in which both perceive B as having red skin. However, A wrongly makes use of an assumption that if someone has red

skin he is sunburned. Since A has red skin he concludes that the red skin is due to sunburn. B, of course, knows that his red skin is due to a skin disease. With this example we see clearly that *ja* instructs the hearer to be aware of mutual manifestness, in order to derive the same interpretation as himself, but in spite of mutual manifestness the hearer may not derive the same interpretation, he may only understand why the speaker made certain assumptions manifest.

As said before whenever the speaker uses *ja* he claims to have high evidence. This is different with unstressed *wohl*. In the case of unstressed *wohl* the speaker is also indicating that the hearer has evidence available in form of mutual manifestness. The speaker commits himself to less than full evidence and sometimes hopes that the hearer may confirm or contradict. Seeing someone yawning A says to B:

(20) Du bist *wohl* müde. 'It seems you are tired'.

Here A has an assumption available 'If someone yawns he is perhaps tired'. A is not completely sure because one can also be bored and yawn. Surely the hearer could either strengthen the assumption or contradict it.

With stressed *wóhl* the speaker is not indicating mutual manifestness. Quite the contrary, he is contradicting the hearer, who has other assumptions. Consider (21):

(21) A: Karin mag keinen Reisbrei. 'Karin does not like rice pudding.'  
B: Das weiß ich *wóhl*. 'I am *well* aware of that'.

A has an assumption 'If someone gives someone else food then he gives him something that he will like' and therefore assumes that B does not know that Karin does not like Reisbrei. *Wóhl* contradicts that assumption.

Unlike unstressed *wohl* stressed *wóhl* conveys full evidence like *ja* but does not assume mutual manifestness.

Up to now I have ignored the question whether *ja* and *wohl* are conceptual or procedural, whether they function on the proposition expressed or on higher level explicature. I would like to discuss that under the next point.

### 3.3 Concepts and constraints on higher level explicatures

An utterance has typically more than one explicature. An utterance like (22) taken from Wilson and Sperber (1990:17)

(22) Marie to Pierre: (sadly): 'I cannot help you', can have the following explicatures:  
a. Marie cannot help Pierre to find a job.  
b. Marie says that she cannot help Pierre to find a job.  
c. Marie believes that she cannot help Pierre to find a job.  
d. Marie regrets that she cannot help Pierre to find a job.

The explicatures of an utterance are constructed by enriching the logical form linguistically encoded in such a way that it expresses a determinate proposition like (22a) and expresses optionally as a higher level explicature a description of a speech act like (22b) or a description of a propositional attitude like (22c) or (22d).

In (22) the higher level explicatures are not made explicit, but the speaker may use certain linguistic phenomena which show clearly that the speaker's intended message functions on a higher level explicatures. Sperber and Wilson (1990:26) provide example (23):

(23) - *Seriously*, I cannot help.  
 - *Frankly*, I cannot help.  
 - *Confidentially*, I cannot help.

They claim that the hearer has to incorporate the adverbial concepts into an explicature on a higher level, of which certain elements are not encoded but have to be inferred.

Wilson and Sperber claim further that not only conceptual phenomena like the above adverbs may function on higher level to motivate the hearer to enrich a prepositional form but also procedural phenomena. They mention the question particle *ti* in French, which is used in some dialects and claim is that this particle does not encode a conceptual representation but a constraint on higher level explicature.

These constraints are procedural (computational) phenomena similar to the inferential constraints *so* and *after all* first introduced by Blakemore 1987. But unlike the phenomena introduced by Blakemore, these constraints on higher level explicatures seem to encode a procedure for constructing an explicature on a higher level rather than a concept.

Ifantidou (1994) shows that evidentials, like speech act and attitudinal markers function on higher level explicatures. She mainly deals with adverbial and parenthetical phenomena containing concepts, but mentions that the interpretive use marker *re* in Sissala, introduced in Blass (1990) as functioning on explicatures, is procedural in nature. I agree with her and my claim is that *ja* and *wohl* in German are also evidential constraints on higher level explicature, not of a semantic conceptual nature, as most German analysts assumed, but of a computational, procedural nature relevant only to pragmatic interpretation.

My claim is that *ja* constrains the proposition expressed to be embedded in a higher level explicature expressing the full evidence of mutual manifestness, while unstressed *wohl* constrains to less than full evidence of mutual manifestness. It is clear that these constraints bear on truth conditions. By using *wohl*, for instance, the speaker indicates that he has less than full evidence for the truth of the proposition expressed. So, we have the rare case here of constraints having effect on truth-conditions, thus confirming Wilson and Sperber's assumption that procedural constraints are more often than not non-truthconditional but they may be truthconditional in certain cases, as I have also shown with the interpretive use marker *re* (Blass, 1990).

My claim is that stressed *wohl*, unlike unstressed *wohl* is conceptual, similar to the adverbs mentioned in section 2 and is therefore not a constraint. My main reason for this analysis is that it has intuitively a conceptual meaning, which could be paraphrased with 'definitely' and

it can be intensified with *sehr*. It seems that every case of stressed *wohl* could be intensified with *sehr*.

Even though *wóhl* has to be seen as conceptual and is therefore not a constraint, the contrastive stress is a constraint, functioning within the same scope as the concept *wóhl*. What confirms that this *wóhl* functions differently from the unstressed one is the fact that its conceptual interpretation is similar to the other clear conceptual uses introduced in section 2. However, my claim is that this conceptual marker has also evidential interpretation.

Thus B in (21) encourages with *wóhl* the enrichment of the following explicature on a higher level:

(21') B knows (has evidence) that Karin does not like rice pudding.

This explicature is designed to contradict by contrastive stress constraint an assumption that A makes manifest with his utterance:

(21'') B does not know that Karin does not like rice pudding.

So what about stressed *já*? My claim is that stressed *já* comprises two constraints, contrastive stress and *ja*. The combination of the two constraints guides the hearer to construct an explicature of the speech act type *telling to*: 'The speaker warns not to do something'. The stress is designed to eliminate all assumptions of the form 'doing P is possible'. The communality with unstressed *ja* is that the speaker indicates that the hearer has mutual manifestness of certain assumptions (usually certain limitations or standards) which he warns him by stress not to violate. In that sense this marker is also an evidential. Taking stress as a separate constraint, this *já* has the same function as all other uses of procedural *ja*, so I will not discuss it any further.

I would like to give examples of how *ja*, *wohl* and *wóhl* are used in everyday language in the news magazine, "Der Spiegel". Why does the speaker or writer need the evidence? I will leave out stressed *já* since I do not consider it a real evidential.

### 3.4 How and why is procedural evidence given in natural text?

The following examples will make it clear that *ja* is usually used to strengthen the proposition expressed by making it ostensive that the hearer or reader has evidence himself. The communicator chooses to use this evidence whenever he wants to justify or confirm something that he is afraid might not be accepted by the receptor without some extra evidence. Consider (24) taken from "Der Spiegel" 12.5.97, Nr. 20:124 from the article "Volldampf unter Wasser" which is about the sinking of the Titanic.

The immediate background of (24) is the order that women and children should go first to the life boats.

(24) a. Aber keinen drängt es, keiner drängt sich, keine Panik auf der "Titanic".  
 b. Sie galt *ja* als unsinkbar,

- c. zumindest stand es so in den Zeitungen.
  - a. 'But no-one is in a hurry, no-one pushes himself, no panic on the "Titanic",
  - b. *after all* she was looked upon as unsinkable,
  - c. at least that is what the newspapers said.'

(24b) is meant to give a reason for (24a) - for why the people were not in a hurry. By using *ja* the writer makes ostensive that this was what was mutually manifest at the time. He also gives the source of the evidence - the newspapers, mentioned in (24c).

Example (25) of "der Spiegel" No. 27, 1.7.96 is taken from an interview between a Spiegel reporter and SPD party leader Oscar Lafontaine P. 22-25. The discussion has to do with the high unemployment rate and the high wage situation in Germany and whether accepting lower wages would be an option for creating more jobs. Lafontaine is of the opinion that wages should not be lowered.

(25) S: ....Und dennoch fehlen in Deutschland rund sechs Millionen Jobs.

'...And in spite of that there is a lack of about six million jobs in Germany.'

L: Deshalb sagen wir *ja* seit langem schon: Wir brauchen mehr Investitionen in Forschung und Ausbildung, die Arbeitnehmer müssen bei Steuern und Abgaben entlastet werden....

'This is why we have said for a long time that we need investments in research and education, the employees need to be relieved of taxes and financial burdens.'

*Ja* is meant to indicate that the policies of the SPD party are mutually manifest and that for a period the party has had an answer to the unemployment problem. Lafontaine wants to strengthen his own and his party's opinions by strengthening the proposition expressed with *ja* evidence. However, in spite of the fact that he assumes that people know the policies of the party, he repeats the main points of the policies, just in case someone does not know, thus making explicit the evidence.

More often than not the receptor is expected to identify the evidence without it being mentioned again. Consider example (26), also from "Der Spiegel" 27, taken from an article by Spiegel reporter Rudolf Augstein: "Verstopfte Trompete", S:25, which has to do with same subject of unemployment:

(26) ... Sie (die SPD) schielt nach den Wählern, und das darf sie *ja*.

... 'The SPD looks to the voters, and, *of course*, it is allowed to do so.'

Nowhere in the text is the evidence made explicit for why 'it is allowed to do so', rather the writer is sure that the reader has access to general knowledge assumptions that parties try to gain voters and present their policies accordingly and that that is acceptable..

Up to now *ja* was used in cases of backwards confirmations. Could it be that *ja* is similar to *after all* that part of its processing instruction is to constrain the proposition expressed as confirming another proposition? The following example taken also from "Der Spiegel" 27, will show that this is not the case. Example (27) is taken from an article about hooligans disturbing camping places and quotes a policeman:

(27) "Der beste Schutz gegen die Schläger wäre schlechtes Wetter", sagte Polizeichef Schuldt, "aber das dürfen wir uns *ja* eigentlich *auch* nicht wünschen."  
 "The best protection against the hooligans would be bad weather", says police inspector Schuldt, "but of course we are not allowed to wish for that."

Here *of course* expresses the same as *ja* that it is mutually manifest that one is not allowed to wish for rain, because no-one is interested in a vacation with rain. The policeman is not interested in strengthening some other proposition mentioned before, rather he wants to weaken what he said before by mentioning what everyone would agree with. So although rain would be a solution for the hooligans it is no solution for the vacation. This example shows that the constraining function of *ja* is really only giving evidence and not confirmation. More often than not a proposition with *ja* is not only strengthened itself because of the evidence, but it is designed to backwards confirm other assumptions.

So what about examples with *wohl*. Example (28) is also taken from "Der Spiegel" 27, from the article by Rudolf Augstein: "Die verstopfte Trompete", Page 25:

(28) Die Liberalen sind umgefallen, und die SPD ist es, .... auch.  
 Hier gilt *wohl*, was "die Zeit" vermutet: "Die Liberalen werden sich erst wieder lautstark röhren, wenn die Sozialdemokraten - genauso rechtsstaatswidrig - die beweislose Beschlagnahme vermeintlich unsauberer Vermögenswerte verlangen...."  
 'The Liberals have fallen, and the SPD ....also. *It seems* that it is the case what "die Zeit" (newspaper) assumes: "The Liberals will only then react when the Social Democrats - just as much against the law - demand the confiscation of apparently dubious properties...."

This example shows clearly the evidential nature of *wohl*, because the evidence, taken from the newspaper "die Zeit" is stated. However, what "die Zeit" writes is taken as an assumption, not as something completely sure and so Augstein too does not take full responsibility for the truth of the proposition expressed. Nevertheless, the introduced quote with *wohl* is designed to strengthen Augstein's claim that 'the Liberals and the SPD have fallen'.

As with *ja* there are cases where the evidence is implicit. Consider example (29) taken also from "Der Spiegel" 27, from the article by Bruno Schrep "Du mußt nur herumhorchen" about young people in the Stazi and their victims P: 68:

(29) In der Kleinstadt, in der sich viele Bewohner kennen kursieren Gerüchte. "Warum hat die Armee deinen Sohn weggejagt?" fragen Kolleginnen die Mutter, "er taugt *wohl* nichts."  
 'In the small town, in which many inhabitants know each other, there are rumors going around: The mother's colleagues ask: "Why has the army chased away your son? "Is he no good?"

*Wohl* makes sense with a generally assumed background that men are only sent away by the army if they are no good. Thus, as with *ja* the evidence is often general cultural knowledge. If he was no good, a reason for the army's action would be found. Again the utterance with *wohl* is designed to confirm.

What is especially interesting is that *ja* and *wohl* may occur together. So how can something be at the same time sure and not sure? Consider 30, again taken from “Der Spiegel 27” from the article: “Gemogelt und verloren” which deals with Jürgen Schneider’s tricks and mistakes with his building deals, P. 92-103, page 95:

(30) Für die Banken, die ihm in erster Linie zu reichlich Frostgeld verhalfen, findet Schneider dagegen keine Worte des Mitleids. Es klänge *ja wohl auch* zu sehr nach Heuchelei.  
 ‘For the banks, who gave him all this money, he (Schneider) has no words of pardon. *After all*, would it not sound too hypocritical?’

My intuitions are not completely clear, but what may be going on here is that *ja* gives sure evidence for how people generally would interpret such a statement, while *wohl* with lesser evidence leaves it open whether Schneider would have been hypocritical. But these examples need further research. *Auch* indicates that the proposition in which it occurs backwards confirms the preceding proposition. Here is formally marked what was already noticed without  *auch* before that propositions with evidential markers often backwards confirm other propositions mentioned before.

So, how does stressed *wohl* occur in texts of “Der Spiegel”? Consider example (31) from “Der Spiegel” No. 20/12.5.97 taken from an interview between Butros Ghali and a Spiegel reporter on page 158:

(31) a. *Ghali*: Mein politischer Fehler war mein Beharren auf Unabhängigkeit.  
 ‘My political mistake was my insistence on independence.’

b. *Spiegel*: Weil Sie der Supermarkt Amerika die Stirn zeigen wollten?  
 ‘Because you wanted to go against the super power America?’

c. *Ghali*: Nein, Ich weiß sehr *wohl*, daß ein Uno-Generalsekretär ohne die Zustimmung der Supermacht und der anderen ständigen Mitglieder des Weltsicherheitsrats nichts unternehmen kann.....  
 ‘No, I know very *well*, that a general secretary of the UN cannot do anything without the super power and the other regular members of the world security council’.

Here in Ghali’s answer (31c) *wohl* is already placed explicitly on a higher level and the evidence that Ghali ‘knows’ is also made explicit, which is designed to contradict what the Spiegel reporter thought of him in (31b).

The next example taken also from “Der Spiegel” 20, from the article “Moskau’s böse Buben”, page 166.

(32) Nadeschka Krupskaja, Lenins Lebensgefährtin, wagte sogar Systemkritik:  
 Die Wurzeln der Obdachlosigkeit seien sehr *wohl* auch in der Gegenwart zu suchen.  
 ‘Nadeschka Krupskaja, Lenin’s partner, dared even to criticise the system:  
 She said that the roots of homelessness are very *well* to be found in the present.’

Lenins partner indicates that she has evidence that the roots of homelessness are to be found in the present. She does not indicate what exactly the evidence is and the higher explicature to which *sehr wóhl* conceptually belongs and which has to be enriched, is not made explicit, but she contradicts any beliefs, which she assumes to be there, that the reasons are not to be found in the present.

I will give one more example with stressed *wóhl* to show that even in a case where there is no explicit *sehr* ‘very’ mentioned, it could be included. Example (34) is taken from “Der Spiegel” 20/12.5.97, from the article “Gefangene ihrer Gefühle” on page 56:

(34) Daß weder der eine noch der andere am Ende allzuviel bewegen wird, sei damit auch nicht bestritten. (*Sehr*) *Wóhl* aber, daß die Politiker dieses Schneckentempo auch noch als Erfolg verkaufen können.  
 ‘It is not controversial that neither the one nor the other will achieve very much at the end, but it is (*very*) well (controversial) that the politicians can sell this snail speed as a success.’

It would be no problem in this case to intensify the conceptual meaning of *wóhl* with *sehr*. In this section I tried to show how the use of *ja*, *wohl* and *wóhl* serves to provide evidence for the proposition expressed, evidence which functions on higher level explicature, which is usually not explicit, but ostensibly indicated as existing by the use of the markers. In the case of *ja* and *wohl* this is done in a procedural way. In the case of *wóhl* this concept is part of the linguistic make up of the higher level explicature. In each of the three cases the proposition expressed is strengthened with this evidence. In the case of *ja* and *wohl*, these are strengthened propositions often meant to backwards confirm other propositions or assumptions. In the case of *wóhl*, the strengthened proposition is meant to contradict an assumption of the communicator. In the case of *ja* and *wóhl*, the communicator has full evidence for the truth of the proposition expressed. In the case of *wohl* the speaker takes responsibility for less than full evidence for the truth of the proposition expressed. Thus these markers have an effect on truth conditions and *ja* and *wohl* are examples of procedural markers with no conceptual content affecting the truth of the proposition expressed.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper, I attempted to explain the function of modal *ja*, *wohl* and *wóhl* within in the framework of relevance theory, which provided a theoretical explanation for the mutuality component that is part of native speakers’ intuition, by applying the notion of mutual manifestness. On the other hand relevance theory explains well the nature of the particle, in two cases *ja* and *wohl*, as a procedural constraint functioning on higher level explicature, in one case as a conceptual marker being part of the linguistic content of this explicature. Furthermore, it was assumed that conventional implicatures and constraints on relevance are usually non-truthconditional. Wilson and Sperber (1990, 1993) predicted that there may be exceptions. *Ja* and *wohl* are examples of this.

Moreover, relevance theory provides a cognitive reason for the strengthening of propositions expressed, if this strengthening is not relevant in its own right, it is, as we have seen, to

backwards confirm or contradict other assumptions. Thus the use of these so-called modal particles make very good sense in a relevance theoretic modal.

## REFERENCES

Abraham, W. (ed.) (1991). *Discourse particles*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia.

Abraham, W. (1991). 'Discourse particles in German: How does their illocutive force come about?' In Abraham (ed.) 1991.

Barnes, J. (1984). 'Evidentials in the Tuyuca verb'. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 50:255-71.

Blakemore, D. (1987). *Semantic constraints on relevance*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Blakemore, D. (1991). *Understanding Utterances*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Blass, R. (1989). 'Grammaticalisation of interpretive use: the case of *re* in Sissala', *Lingua* 79: 299-326.

Blass, R. (1990). *Relevance relations in discourse: A study with special reference to Sissala*. Cambridge Studies in Linguistics, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Doherty, M. (1985). 'Epistemische Bedeutung', Berlin: *Studia Grammatica*

Doherty, M. (1987). *Epistemic Meaning*. Berlin.

Foolen, A. (1989). 'Beschreibungsebenen für Partikelbedeutungen', in Weydt (ed.) 1989.

Franck, D. (1980). *Grammatik und Konversation*. Scriptor, Königstein/Ts.

Givón, T. 1982. 'Evidentiality and epistemic space', *Studies in Language* 6, (24):24.

Hentschel, E. (1983). 'Partikeln und Wortstellung'. In H. Weydt (ed.) 1983, p. 46-53

Hentschel, E. 1986. *Funktion und Geschichte deutscher Partikeln. Ein Handbuch für den Ausländerunterricht*. Leipzig

Katny, A. (1989). 'Wohl als Partikel und Modalwort und seine Übersetzungsmöglichkeiten ins Polnische.' In Weydt (ed.) 1989.

Ifantidou, E. (1994). *Evidentials and Relevance*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University College London, London.

Levinsohn, S.H. (1975). 'Functional perspectives in Inga'. *Journal of Linguistics* 11:1-37

Lindner, K. (1991). 'Ja and doch as modal particles', in Abraham 1991.

Palmer, F.R. (1986). *Mood and Modality*, Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Rudolph, E. (1989). 'Partikeln in der Textorganisation', in Weydt (ed.) 1989.

Sperber D. and D. Wilson. (1986). *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Weydt. H. (ed.) (1983). *Partikeln und Interaktion*, Niemeyer, Tübingen

Weydt, H. (ed.) (1989). *Sprechen mit Partikeln*. de Gruyter, Berlin.

Wilson D. and D. Sperber. 1990. 'Forme linguistique et pertinence', in *Cahier de Linguistique Française* , 11, p. 13-35