Das sieht ja ganz anders aus, wie fühlst du dich denn? Teaching Modal Particles *ja* and *denn* with the *Queer Eye Germany* series: a didactic model based on a Descriptive Format

Marceli Cherchiglia Aquino[1]

Abstract: This article proposes a linguistically based framework that can be used for the teaching of Modal Particles (MPs) using contextualized examples of authentic interactions from the Netflix's series *Queer Eye Germany*. For the description of MPs *ja* and *denn* we employ the Descriptive Format (DIEWALD et al. 2017), an interlinguistic schematic table which provides a definition of the morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics of MPs. The format provides a linguistic framework for the development of a didactic material for teaching MPs, that is divided into three stages (ENDE et al. 2013): introduction, elaboration and production. Therefore, the activities of the didactic model will be carried out in two phases: (i) the description of the formal and pragmatic characteristics of MPs *ja* and *denn* through the Descriptive Format; (ii) the elaboration of a didactic sequence with reception and production tasks using occurrences of MPs in authentic communicative contexts. This proposal aims to fill gaps in the teaching of MPs that takes into account a metalinguistic reflection (AQUINO 2020), by which students can critically reflect on linguistic norms and the sociocultural reality of the target as well as of their own language.

Keywords: German modal particles; Didactic Model; Descriptive Format; authentic materials

Resumo: Este artigo tem como objetivo propor uma sequência didática para o ensino de Partículas Modais Alemãs (PMs) por meio de um formato linguístico descritivo com exemplos contextualizados de interações autênticas retirados da série *Queer Eye Germany* da Netflix. Para a descrição das características formais e comunicativas das PMs *ja* e *denn*, utilizamos o Formato Descritivo (DIEWALD et al. 2017), uma tabela esquemática que fornece definições para os aspectos morfológicos, sintáticos, semânticos e pragmáticos das PMs. O Formato fornecerá um arcabouço linguístico para o desenvolvimento de uma sequência didática para o ensino das partículas em contextos de alemão como língua adicional. A sequência será dividida em três etapas (ENDE et al. 2013): introdução, elaboração e produção. As atividades do modelo didático serão realizadas em duas fases: (i) a descrição das características formais e comunicativas das PMs *ja* e *denn* por meio do Formato Descritivo; (ii) a elaboração de uma sequência didática com tarefas de recepção e produção com ocorrências das PMs em contextos autênticos. Esta proposta visa

[1] Universidade de São Paulo, Departamento de Letras Modernas, Avenida Luciano Gualberto, 403, Cidade Universitária, São Paulo, SP, 05508-010, Brasil. Email: marceli.c.aquino@usp.br. ORCID: 0000-0003-0518-7639.

preencher lacunas no ensino de PMs levando em conta uma reflexão metalinguística (AQUINO 2020), em que as estudantes possam refletir criticamente sobre as normas linguísticas e a realidade sociocultural da língua alvo, bem como de sua própria língua.

Palavras-chave: partículas modais alemãs; Modelo Didático; Formato Descritivo; materiais autênticos

1 Introduction

The German Modal Particles (MPs)[2] are pragmatic and communicative markers essential to social and interpersonal cohesion in communicative acts, i.e., indicating characteristics of the relationship between interlocutors, as well as the type of social act performed. These elements constitute a word class by which the speaker indicates the specific proposition of an utterance as communicatively presupposed, i.e., as a particular type of pragmatic presupposition, which represents a logical inference of the explicitly expressed utterance (AQUINO forthcoming). According to Diewald (2013: 33), by including the MP, the pragmatic presupposition implies three main features: (i) it has a *propositional content* or *attitude*, that frequently contains illocutionary information; (ii) it is *pragmatically given* in the communicative context; (iii) it can be interpreted as a *potential text*, that is, the utterance with MP can be made explicit via a linguistically encoded proposition. Furthermore, the meaning of each MP depends on the context (communicative situation), due to their function of connecting an utterance to the presumed state of affairs[3] in the pragmatic situation (DIEWALD ET AL. 2017: 232).

With regard to the meaning of MPs, we work with a minimalist approach that considers each particle as having a specific communicative function, which consists in anchoring the utterance in a dialogic setting in a unique way (AQUINO forthcoming). In the minimalist approach each MP has a distinctive lexical meaning that can be designated by labels also used for the description of other functional classes, e.g., concessive for *doch*, adversative for *aber*, affirmative for *ja*, interrogative for *denn* (KREŠIĆ & BATINIĆ 2014: 39 - 41). The MP *ja* is affirmative as it confirms or affirms the factuality of a given situation, while *denn* is used to interrogate about a specific information about which the

[2] The following 15 items constitute the core set of German MPs*: aber, auch, bloß, denn, doch, eben, eigentlich, etwa, halt, ja, mal, nur, schon, vielleicht, wohl* (HELBIG; BUSCHA 2002; DUDEN 2016).

[3] The term "state of affairs" indicates the way in which the facts and conditions relevant for the communication are set up at some point in a given communicative context from the speaker's and listener's point of view (AQUINO forthcoming).

interlocutor must have something to say. By having a highly structured internal paradigmatic organization, we consider in this article that each MP articulates a main communicative **function -** which we refer to as the nuclear function - that is always present in all occurrences of each particle. Nonetheless, the specific pragmatic **meaning** of MPs must be understood both by the recognition of the nuclear function, as well as by the interpretation of the communicative situation (Aquino & Arantes 2020: 172). The nuclear function is, therefore, different from the pragmatic meaning. In the sentence "Du kannst *aber* kochen", the nuclear function of *aber* is to indicate an adversity, i.e. that the speaker's expectation is different from the reality. The pragmatic meaning depends on the analysis of the context in which the sentence with the MP refers; in this case it could be either a compliment or an ironic comment on the culinary skills of the interlocutor.

Since the beginning of the advancement of the communicative approach (CA), there has been a growing concern on teaching perspectives of additional languages (AL) that reflect on communication in contexts close to sociocultural realities (Aquino & Cherchiglia 2021; Andrade e Silva 2017). Currently, the Intercultural and Linguistic Awareness approaches (*Sprachbewusstsein*) – in addition to taking into account the relationship between language and culture –, include a metalinguistic reflection (such as inference) in their research and language teaching perspectives. These approaches seek an interdisciplinary linguistic awareness through a holistic understanding of the learning process (Luchtenberg 2008: 112), in which the objective is to make the learner aware of the linguistic and sociocultural norms of the target language, as well as of their own. Despite being of great importance for everyday interaction in German, MPs are rarely addressed in the classroom, especially because of the lack of suitable materials for their understanding and usage within relevant communicative contexts (Aquino 2020: 136).

In order to fill these gaps, some proposals have been made. Among them, one of the most promising, due to its simplicity and cohesion, is the Descriptive Format (Diewald et al. 2017), that schematically describes the characteristics (on levels of morphology, syntax and pragmatics) of MPs. For this reason, the Descriptive Format is an ideal tool for teaching and learning particles such as *ja* and *denn*. In this article, the Descriptive Format will be assembled with inputs taken from the first episode of the Netflix series *Queer Eye Germany*. Considering the lack of authentic marks of orality in textbooks of German as an additional language (GAL) (Aquino & Cherchiglia 2021; Maijala 2007), one of our aims is to develop a didactic model using examples of

occurrences of MPs *ja* and *denn* in contextualized interactions (we consider the series to be an authentic input as it is not created for teaching purposes and does not have a script). The activities suggested in the didactic model are divided into three main sections (ENDE ET AL. 2013: 103) - introduction, elaboration and production - which can be adapted for different levels of language knowledge (between A2 and C1) and learning necessities. In addition to offering linguistic inputs to the formulation of the Descriptive Format, the model opens an opportunity for students to get in touch with authentic genres as well as with current and relevant discussions in the target language.

Although many other studies on teaching of MPs in AL contexts have already considered the importance of films, series and music as relevant teaching materials, no concrete didactic proposal has been presented so far. This work aims to have an impact on filling this gap. Therefore, with the goal to overcome the main difficulties of teaching and learning MPs, we introduce in this article, both a schematic proposal with a linguistic description, and a didactic model for the teaching of MPs *ja* and *denn*.

In the next section we introduce the database used for linguistic analysis and teaching material, i.e., the first episode of the *Queer Eye Germany* series and the occurrences of modal particles, which include the two items analyzed here. In the third section we present the Descriptive Format that will be used in the description scheme of the MPs *ja* and *denn*. The structure of the didactic model and the description of the activities (introduction, elaboration and production) can be found in the fourth section. In the final section we conclude with a general discussion and future perspectives.

2 Data analysis

Language is considered the primary means by which humans convey meaning, i.e. it is through language that we communicate, produce and receive knowledge and, above all, build and share worldviews. For this reason, language, whether written or spoken, enables the construction of new knowledge, concepts and paradigms that make it possible to (re)signify the world around us. In this article we consider that the learning of an additional language needs to go beyond the study centered on grammatical rules and structures, i.e., it is also important to develop knowledge and experiences that encompass other approaches and perspectives present in the target language and society. As mentioned earlier, MPs reflect the domain of social and interpersonal cohesion in communication, in

the sense that they help interlocutors to express and understand their role in communication and sociocultural exchanges. Considering that learning an AL means to experience and reflect on the source and target social practices, pragmatic knowledge, such as MPs, strengthens the linguistic and intercultural relationship between speakers.

Since every communicative discourse occurs at a certain time and place, it is produced by one historical subject and received by other individuals, implying that through the work with texts it is possible to construct contextual meaning (BAKHTIN; GHASEMIPOR 2011). By working with authentic texts, one is confronted with different sociocultural realities allowing for greater engagement and (co)participation with the language in use. The original Netflix series from the United States *Queer Eye* (a spin-off of the television series *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*) is a reality show where five specialists (The Fab Five) in different areas aim to improve the lifestyle of the participants of the show in five categories: grooming; food and wine; culture; fashion; design. The series started in 2018 playing an important role in promoting the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community. Given the increasing success achieved by the show worldwide, many countries have been creating their own adaptations, for example Germany. Due to space restrictions, this article does not intend to address specific LGBTQIA+ issues but rather highlight the importance of including diverse social issues when choosing materials for teaching additional languages. For this reason, we believe that the choice of the *Queer Eye Germany* series as our data for the didactic model proposed in this article is particularly fitting, opening many possibilities for critical-reflective linguistic and socio-cultural discussions.

The German version, which was launched in 2022 on the streaming platform, follows the same proposal as its predecessor, even though, as expected, with specific linguistic and socio-cultural adaptations to the German context. In the first episode "More is more", which will be analyzed in this article, the viewers are introduced to the five German experts and to Björn, an insecure single father of an 11-year-old boy, who works in a cemetery, and lives in a house with an excessive amount of sports memorabilia. For the makeover, Björn wants to improve his image, cook healthier food for his family and find a new love.

Each episode of the series lasts for about 50 minutes and, already in the first episode it is possible to notice that the language used is fluid, informal, emotional; and due to this characteristic, many occurrences of MPs can be identified. Given the broad set

of topics discussed (family, lifestyle, LGBTQIA+, interculturality) through an accessible and authentic language, we believe that the use of the series is particularly relevant for teaching GAL. In this article, we will focus on the teaching of MPs, but the series allows for the development of different activities, which can be adaptable to specific local needs. Finally, we point out that, in addition to the regular subtitles, Netflix offers the tool *Lingvo*.[4] It allows the viewer to watch the content with two subtitles, one in the original language, and the other as a translation into an additional language, presenting a realtime transcript of the dialogues. Furthermore, the *Lingvo* tool offers a dictionary which is activated only by passing the cursor over the word, allowing not only to check the individual meaning of each lexicon, but also to discover to which word class it belongs.

The first episode of *Queer Eye Germany* had a total occurrence of 43 MPs and among them, the most frequent were *ja* (with 12 occurrences) and *denn* (with 10 occurrences). For this reason, we decided to work with the two most frequent MPs, as they convey a broader set of examples and contexts to include in the didactic model. In addition, to better profit from the classroom environment for teaching MPs, it is recommended to select a small number of particles at each time, so that it is possible to discuss and work with all their characteristics (i.e. their formal and communicative functions and structure) and uses in a specific context. In the following table (Table 2) we present the occurrence of all MPs (in order of most to least frequent) found in the first episode of the series:

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[4] https://lingvo.tv/?ref=producthunt

Table 1: Occurrences and examples of MPs in the first episode *of Queer Eye Germany*

PM	Occurrence	Example
ja	12	Wir wollen **ja** Diversität, oder? Du weißt **ja** was ich beruflich mache.
denn	10	Was erwartest du **denn**? Wie macht ihr das **denn**?
halt	9	Ich habe dann **halt** so gemerkt, dass wir **halt** total ähnlich sind. Ich bin **halt** ein Strahlemann.
mal	7	Schau **mal** hinter dich. Formulier **mal**.
doch	3	Das ist **doch** mein Outfit fürs Date. Hack **doch** Holz für uns.
doch mal	2	Jetzt geh **doch mal** rein! Geh **doch mal** rein!

Source: Prepared by the author

Some occurrences of MPs *ja* and *denn* were selected from the sample as examples for the discussion of their communicative functions, as well as for the elaboration of the Descriptive Format. For the didactic model, more diversity of excerpts with MPs and their contexts of occurrence will be brought. In the next section we present in detail the main objectives and structure of the Descriptive Format (DIEWALD et al. 2017), based on a schematic description of MPs on levels of morphology, syntax and pragmatics. The two next subsections will contain the analysis of MPs *ja* and *denn within* the Descriptive Format.

Finally, we would like to emphasize the relevance of employing a Netflix series for teaching MPs in GAL. In a reality show style series not only the students can be in contact with a broad set of communicative contexts and, therefore, a high frequency of occurrences of MPs, but they may also be exposed to unspoken language features, such as gestures and facial expressions. For this reason, this proposal can benefit the learning of new vocabulary, consolidate grammatical structure, and also promote socio-cultural reflections in an authentic setting (FRUMUSELU et al. 2015: 3-4). The visual aid provided by the videos in combination with sounds and gestures can, therefore, enhance the relationship between words and meanings (MATIELO et al. 2018: 2), which is an excellent perspective for teaching MPs. Furthermore, teaching with authentic and contextualized

materials can encourage students to be more motivated in the language learning and have a more active participation in the classroom.

3 The description scheme

Diewald et al. (2017) present a Descriptive Format that provides a schematic definition of the morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics of MPs in German and Croatian.[5] The proposed schema distinguishes particle meanings with respect to context, sentence types and nuclear function (DIEWALD et al. 2017; DIEWALD, FISCHER 1998). According to the authors, the Descriptive Format aims to facilitate the process of understanding and memorizing the meanings of MPs in German and other languages, like Croatian, English and Portuguese. Given its objective and detailed nature, the Descriptive Format can be a very useful tool for didactic practices when teaching MPs. For this reason, the main goal of our analysis with the Descriptive Format is to comprise the formal and functional features of the MPs *ja* and *denn* in a way that is suitable for a GAL context.

To exemplify the Descriptive Format, we present the model with the MP *bloß* introduced by Diewald et al. (2017), which will be adapted to *ja* and *den* in the forthcoming subsections of this article. In the first section of the Descriptive Format (Table 2), the lemma (*bloß*) and the sentence type in which the MP occurs (*wh-sentence*) is specified. The relational meaning (*focusing*) or the nuclear function, which is shared by all variants of the particle *bloß,* is shown next. The homonyms[6] are also listed (*focus particle, adjective, discourse marker, adverb*). The second section contains the word category or type of construction and its syntactic sentence position (*Modal Particle, Middle field*). In the next row the context is described, which represents the pragmatic meaning of the MP, in this example the MP *bloß* describes the speaker's intentions about the real or presumed state of affairs. The paraphrased meaning, that is, the explanation of the communicative function of the particle, appears in the fourth section and corresponds

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[5] Aquino (forthcoming) introduces a review of the Descriptive Format for the German and Portuguese language pair, which may be relevant to teaching of MPs in the Brazilian context by the cross-cultural approach.

[6] The majority of MPs have homonyms (also doublets or homonym) in other word classes, such as adjectives (*eben, bloß, wohl*), adverbs (*schon, auch, mal, wohl, eben, bloß*), conjunctions (*aber, doch, denn*), discourse markers (*ja*) and verbs (*halt*) (AQUINO forthcoming).

to the speaker's intention in the specific context, here: the speaker is astonished by what she or he is asking, eagering to know the answer. It is important to highlight that the paraphrased meaning may vary depending on the context or sentence type, but the core or nuclear function remains always the same. The final row of the Descriptive Format contains examples from authentic corpus and in the bottom are shown the partial or full synonyms (if applicable) of the MP (here *nur*). The following is the complete structure of the Descriptive Format for the MP *bloß* (DIEWALD ET AL. 2017):

Table 2: Description of bloß in a wh-question

Bloß *Focusing*	**Wh-question** homonym: focus particle, adjective, discourse marker, adverb
Morphological and syntactic properties	Modal Particle, Middle field
Context	The interest of the speaker is focused on the real or presumed state of affairs
Meaning, paraphrase: Usage example:	I am astonished by what I am asking about, which is why I am very eager to find out the answer (Und immer habe ich beruhigend auf sie eingesprochen, bis das Fürchterliche vorüber war. Dann sagten die Menschen, sie haben uns heute viel geholfen) Wo nehmen Sie **bloß** die große Ruhe her? (Und ich habe gesagt, na, es ist **ja** alles gut, wir sind **ja** drüber weggekommen) [DGD: 4050.192, 1] Synonym: nur

Source: Diewald et al. (2017: 246)

Without a MP the utterances would be simply declarative, exclamative, imperative and interrogative sentences, i.e., without anchoring any dialogic and contextual information. According to Diewald et al. (2007), in a Wh-question the MP *bloß* (Wo nehmen Sie *bloß* die große Ruhe her?) indicates an astonishment to what is being asked about. In imperative sentences with *bloß* (Heiraten Sie *bloß* nicht!), the speaker points out that, from her or his perspective, it is important to do or not to do something. Finally, in

exclamatory sentences (Hätte sie *bloß* etwas gesagt!), the speaker uses the MP to mark astonishment in the form of a disapproval.

The results of previous research in the language pair German/Croatian (DIEWALD et al. 2017) and German/Portuguese (AQUINO forthcoming) have shown that the Descriptive Format can be a very relevant tool for the linguistic description of the grammatical and communicative function of individual MPs. But since the focus of this article is the elaboration of a didactic model for teaching German MPs, we will concentrate the analysis only on the description of *ja* and *denn* for didactic purposes.

In the next subsections (3.1 and 3.2) we aim to initiate the discussion of the main characteristics of the MPs *ja* and *denn*. Both lexemes are described with their morphological and syntactic features and their specific nuclear functions in contextualized examples. As discussed earlier, the Descriptive Format provides a very structured basis for the definition of the word class of MPs, making this model relevant for linguistic analysis as well as for language teaching.

3.1 The descriptive format of *ja*

MPs have a very special function of relating the utterance to a dialogic setting which the speaker regards as relevant for the success of the communication. The reference to something that is pragmatically given is the central common function of all MPs. Therefore, by using a specific particle, the speaker indicates that there is a pragmatically shared common ground to which this utterance connects to (DIEWALD et al. 2017: 237). The MP *ja* marks that some information in the utterance should be shared by the interlocutors, i.e., indicating an expectation of agreement in relation to what is being said (BRÜNJES 2014: 144). Given that the information in the proposition should already be known to the listener, no contradiction is expected, i.e, the knowledge or expectations of the interlocutor are also taken into account (SCHOONJANS 2018: 14). As was discussed earlier, the exact meaning of each MPs can vary depending on the context. In the following, we address the communicative function of *ja* in a scene from the *Queer Eye Germany*:

(a) 6'14": Ayan: Ihr seid Fußballfans, ne?

Roman: Ja, sieht man **ja** auch ein bisschen.

In this scene (a) the five specialists (Fab Fünf) enter Björn's house (for whom they are going to do the makeover) and find his son, Roman, with a soccer ball in the garden. Ayan asks if they are soccer fans and Roman points to a big yellow hanging flag of a well-known German soccer team (*Borussia Dortmund*) and says: "Ja, sieht man **ja** auch ein bisschen" (Yes, it is possible to see a little bit). Everyone laughs at the boy's spontaneous response and the obviousness of the situation. The particle *ja* indicates that the information should be known, and if it is not, it is hereby added to a knowledge base, being accordingly treated as known information. With the utterance, the boy indicates that the interlocutor knows or must know the answer, while there is no reason for the listener to contradict his proposition, which is exactly what happens in the scene. In this context, Ayan was probably trying to strike up a conversation with the boy by talking about something he likes, and Roman responds in a humorous and perhaps ironic way.

In exclamations (or emphatic statements) the MP *ja* is used to mark surprise at the accuracy of the facts. It is also expected that the interlocutor should be aware of the facts and, consequently, no contradiction is expected, as we can see in the following example:

(b) 37'57" Roman: Das sieht **ja** ganz anders aus!

Björn: Ja!

Roman: Ist das noch unsere Wohnung, oder?

In this second scene (b) Björn and Roman are walking through the front door of the house for the first time after the major renovation carried out by one of the Fab Fünf specialists. As expected from the plot of the series, the house underwent a huge change, being decorated in a different way than it was previously. The Fab Fünf had already seen the house, so the fact is already known to them, but Roman, who sees the house for the first time, exclaims spontaneously in surprise: Das sieht *ja* ganz anders aus! (My gosh, that looks very different!). Björn agrees and Roman jokes asking if it was really their house. Along this line, we can confirm that the MP *ja* has the main function of indicating the speaker's expectation of agreement with the shared mutual knowledge, even in the case of a surprise or irony.

With these two examples taken from the series, we were able to underline the nuclear function of the MP *ja* (agreement on a mutual knowledge) and recognize its specific meaning within the context (surprise, irony). To better delineate the features of the MP *ja*, we propose a categorization within the Descriptive Format that outline the lexeme's specific meanings and the type of reference to the pragmatic context, while also listing relevant morphological and syntactic features of the particle:

Table 3: Description of *ja* in declarative and exclamatory sentences

Ja *Accordance*	Declarative and Exclamatory Homonym: discourse marker
Morphological and syntactic properties	Modal Particle, Middle Field
Context	Confirms or affirms the factuality of a given state of affairs.
Meaning, paraphrase: Usage example:	I say this, knowing that you know it already, and that you agree. (Through contextual information, the team's flag, Roman indicates that it's clear he's a soccer fan): Ja, sieht man **ja** auch ein bisschen. (Roman sees the result of the renovation that the show has done on his house and exclaims in surprise): Das sieht **ja** ganz anders aus!

Source: Prepared by the author

3.2 The descriptive format of *denn*

The MP *denn* can only be used in questions (WEYDT 1983), like in wh-questions (Wie heißt du *denn*? - What is your name actually?) and in yes-no-questions ("Warst du *denn* noch nie wirklich verliebt?" - Were you really never in love?). *Denn* as a MP indicates that the content of the sentence in which it appears points back to something that can be found in the preceding context, i.e., it marks a consecutive relation between the pragmatic pretext and the situation presented in the utterance (BRÜNJES 2014: 110-111). Therefore, the proposition with the MP *denn* is represented as pragmatically presupposed and indicates that the question is prompted by components of the context. To better understand

the communicative function of the particle *denn*, we will analyze two contextualized examples from the research data:

(c) 0 '11" sec Aljosha: Queer Eye kommt endlich nach Deutschland!

                  Ayan: Wie geil ist das **denn**?

(d) 6'19" sec David: Sag **mal**, weißt du, was wir hier machen?

          Roman: Meinem Vater helfen, glaub ich.

          Aljosha: Warum braucht er **denn** Hilfe?

          Roman: Ich glaub beim Style so 'n bisschen auch 'n bisschen in der

Wohnung.

The first example (c) contains the very first lines of the episode, started by a comment from Aljosha, who celebrates the fact that the *Queer Eye* series is now in Germany. As a result of this first statement, Ayan replays to Aljosha's statement with the utterance: "Wie geil ist das *denn*?" (How cool is that?). The MP *denn* points back to the preceding context by saying that it is very positive and good that the series has now a German version, marking a direct relation between the situation presented in the utterance and the pragmatic pretext (that is a good thing, something to be happy about). In this scenario, the speaker does not expect a specific response from the interlocutor (who watches the series), perhaps only a confirmation or acknowledgement, since in view of the previous context, the speaker expects that his attitude towards the utterance is understood and probably shared by the interlocutor.

In the second example (d), we go back to the scene where the Fab Fünf have just arrived at Björn and Roman's house and are in the backyard talking to Roman. After asking about his soccer interests (example a) they change topics and David asks him if he knows what they are doing there: Sag *mal*, weißt du, was wir hier machen? (Tell me now, do you know what we're doing here?). In this utterance, David makes use of the MP *mal*, which is used in imperatives for conviction, i.e., to stress that the command holds for an immediate response (the answer should be given now, because it makes sense to do so). Roman responds by saying that he imagines they are there to help his father, which prompts Aljosha to ask: Warum braucht er *denn* Hilfe? (But why does he need help?). Aljosha uses the MP *denn* to interrogate about something specific from the immediate

context (what is the reason why Roman's father needs help, help with what?), about which the interlocutor should know the answer (Roman already mentioned that they must be there to help his father). The MP *denn* is elected when the speaker expects the interlocutor to understand that his/her question is justified by what is perceived in the immediate context and that he/she foresees that the interlocutor has something to say about the given situation.

The examples above offer contextualized examples of the two particles, which can provide a greater understanding of their nuclear function (an accordance about the mutual knowledge, in the case of *ja,* and a contextualized question that the listener knows the answer to, with the MP *denn*) and meaning in specific communicative situations. The main characteristics of *denn* are outlined in the following Descriptive Format:

Table 4: Description of *denn* in interrogative sentences

Denn *Contextualized question*	**Interrogative (Wh-question)** Homonym: conjunction
Morphological and syntactic properties	Modal Particle, Middle Field
Context	The MP *denn* is used to interrogate about something specific that points back to an information that can be found in the preceding context, and the interlocutor should know the answer.
Meaning, paraphrase:	I say this and I know that you know the answer. It's your preceding utterance which made me ask you this.
Usage example:	(Ayan asks the audience at the beginning of the episode how cool it is that the series Queer Eye has arrived in Germany): Wie geil ist das **denn**? (Aljosha asks Björn´s son why he thinks his father needs the show's help with): Warum braucht er **denn** Hilfe?

Source: Prepared by the author

4 The didactic model

The didactic model presented in this section was developed in three phases (introduction, elaboration and production) and aim to both sensibilize students about the relevance of learning about the MPs and offer tools for teachers through an objective scheme with the

main characteristics of MPs *ja* and *denn* For this purpose, we chose to use an audiovisual text, in which the occurrences of MPs were taken from authentic interactions in the series *Queer Eye Germany*. The use of the series as teaching material presents essential benefits for the development of the activities proposed in this article: informal and authentic language use (material not produced for teaching purposes); audiovisual contextualization; recurring and relevant themes (gender issues, LGBTQIA+ discussions, lifestyle and humor); high occurrence of MPs within short and contextualized sentences; accessible language (to A2 - C1 learners); easy access to material through Netflix and social media.

We consider that this model can be adapted to different learning contexts and knowledge levels, as we only present a model suggestion, not a manual that must be followed without flexibility. However, in view of the intrinsic process of understanding the complex function of MPs and the critical ability of abstraction to fulfill the tasks of the didactic model, we consider that the target group for the application of this proposal would be those from an academic context (Jung adults) with language knowledge between A2 and B1. A moderate interest in the teaching and learning of MPs in GAL setting, as well as in the aspects of language in use, is also desired for the successful application of the activities. Furthermore, we hope that this didactic model can be suitable for activities involving not only MPs, but also other linguistic elements and sociocultural issues.

Since audiovisual tasks involve different perceptions that are not limited to lexical or grammatical understanding (BRAUN 2008: 76), we consider that the learning of MPs with authentic materials is relevant not only from the linguistic perspective but also presents a unique opportunity to learn a language from sensory experiences. In this context, didactic material elaborated with authentic audiovisual genres can be very relevant for GAL, as it involves a more complex cognitive process, for example, of the perception and interpretation of the plot, the characters, the gestures and images (CRESPO; ROZENFELD 2018: 172) that allow new sociocultural, linguistic, historical and political experiences of the target - as well as their own - language. For this reason, teaching MPs through series and/or films promotes contact with discourses that circulate in the community of the target language and support learning with contextualized and spontaneous interactions, which can be a way to engage students in their individual

learning process (AQUINO 2020: 45). A schematic table of suggestions on how to implement the activities is presented below:

Table 5: Structure of activities

Phases	Activity	Execution mode	Class	Execution time[7]
Introduction	Discussion about experiences, previous knowledge and interest with respect to MPs	Plenum	I	10 min
	Discussion about learning GAL with authentic materials	Plenum		10 min
	Hypotheses about the *Queer Eye Germany* series from an image	Plenum		10 min
Elaboration	Global understanding of video excerpts with discussion breaks	Individual or groups	II	20 min
	Hypotheses about the meaning of MPs	Groups	III	10 min
	Discussion about the MPs communicative functions (Descriptive Format)	Plenum		20 min
Production	Written and/or oral production to facilitate the use of MPs in different contexts.	Individual or Groups	IV	45 min
	Production presentation and discussion	Plenum	V	30 min

Source: own authorship

As indicated in table (5), within the three phases, the activities can be developed in approximately five encounters - preferably consecutive - in which each of the specific sections can be carried out in a restricted period of time, that can be adapted depending on the number of students and their level of knowledge of the German language. The introduction phase aims to encourage discussions (with the whole class and in groups)

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[7] The execution time of the activities will depend on the size of the group of students and the level of knowledge of the language.

about the student's prior knowledge and experiences about the MPs. It may also be beneficial to discuss the multifold possibilities of learning GAL through authentic materials, thus encouraging students to achieve a more autonomous and motivated attitude towards their own learning interests.

In the second moment of the model, the elaboration, students (individually) will have the opportunity to watch passages from the first episode of *Queer Eye Germany* to achieve global/general understanding of the series' plot. During the viewing, the teacher can take short breaks, asking specific questions (for example: who the characters are, what are they talking about, what the scene is about), and increment discussion topics to assess the learner's needs and difficulties. After watching the excerpts, the students should (in small groups) discuss the possible meanings and functions of the MPs *ja* and *denn* within the context of each scene. At the end, in *plenum*, the teacher can introduce, through the Descriptive Format, the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic features of the MPs *ja* and *denn* (see section 3.1 and 3.2), presenting their nuclear function and meaning within each communicative context. This stage can last about 50 minutes and should be carried out, if possible, in German.

The last phase should be divided into two meetings and will essentially deal with the elaboration and presentation of the results of the written and oral production. The section 4.3 will introduce some suggestions for activities (focused on the function and meaning of MPs and on the creative production of texts and videos), which can be pre-selected by the teachers, or, what would be our suggestion, presented in full so that students can select themselves which activities they would like to be engaged with. In this phase each discussion can last about 30 to 45 min, with interactions preferably in German.

As mentioned before, the division of themes, execution time and number of meetings can be easily adapted, since different teaching scenarios, such as student's previous experiences and interest, internet access, number of learners, can affect the configuration of the didactic sequence. For the systematization proposed in this article, we took as a basis the possible application of the activities in a class of about 20 students from the A2 to B1 level in a university teaching context. In the next section the activities developed in each of the three phases of the didactic model are introduced in greater detail.

4.1 Introduction

We suggest that the introduction should be conducted in plenum in three discussion cycles in order to: access the student's interest and prior knowledge about MPs as well as their learning experience with authentic materials, i.e texts that circulated in and by the target language community, not being created for language teaching purposes; provide a introduction of the series through an initial image to encourage exchange of opinions. During the discussion about the MPs, it can be helpful to present some guiding questions, asking students to answer in plenum, or discuss first in groups and then present their answers to the whole class. Some suggested topics for the first turn of discussions could be based on the following questions:

(a) Habt ihr schon mal von Modalpartikeln gehört? Von welchen und in welchen Zusammenhängen?

(b) Könnt ihr diese MPn verstehen und verwenden?

(c) Welche MPn fallen euch in der deutschen Sprache am meisten auf?

(d) In welchen Medien kommen sie am häufigsten vor, z.B. in der mündlichen Sprache, in journalistischen Texten, Lehrbüchern, Filmen und Serien?

(e) Welche Funktion haben MPn? Wie wichtig sind sie für die Kommunikation?[8]

In the second part of the introduction phase, discussion topics about language learning with authentic materials could be presented through the following questions:

(a) Was sind authentische Materialien?

(b) Enthält das/unser Lehrbuch deiner Meinung nach interessante Themen und Texte?

(c) Welche Materialien verwendet ihr für das individuelle Lernen?

(d) Wie könnten authentische Materialien für relevantes Sprachenlernen genutzt werden?[9]

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[8] (a) What are authentic materials?; (b) Do you think the/our textbook contains interesting topics and texts?; (c) What materials do you use for individual learning?; (d) How could authentic materials be used for relevant language learning?

[9] (a) What can be seen in the picture?; (b) What will this series be about?; (c) Which particles will be the most common in the series?

In the third topic of discussion, the goal of the didactic model will be introduced, including the work with Netflix's series *Queer Eye Germany*. The series can first be presented through an image of the series poster. The goal of this activity is to activate prior knowledge and individual experiences to engage learners in tasks that will be performed in the next stages, motivating their active participation in the learning process. In this last stage of the introduction, the following guiding questions can be asked about the image below (Image 1):

(a) Was ist auf dem Bild zu sehen?

(b) Worum wird es in dieser Serie gehen?

(c) Welche Partikel werden in der Serie am häufigsten vorkommen?[10]

Image 1: *Queer Eye Germany* poster

Source: Netflix (https://www.netflix.com/browse)

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[10] (a) Have you ever heard of modal particles? From which ones and in which contexts? (b) Can you understand and use the MPs? (c) Which MPs do you notice the most in the German language? (d) In which media do they appear most frequently, i.e. in oral language, in journalistic texts, textbooks, films and series? (e) What are the function of MPs? How important are they for communication?

If there is any remaining time and/or interest after the last discussion, it could be relevant to carry out a contextualization regarding the series genre, as well as about the Queer Eye show. For that purpose, the information provided in section 2 of this article can be quite useful. In the next section, we will address the activities of the Elaboration part.

4.2 Elaboration

The goal of the second phase of the didactic model is to develop reception skills in German through audiovisual comprehension (*Hör-Seh-Verstehen*), i.e., a global understanding through sound, visual, contextual and emotional perceptions. As we saw earlier (section 2), the series offers a frequent MP occurrence and the dialogues can be presented through short scenes, where the teacher pauses and eventually asks guiding questions, to verify comprehension problems. The scenes can be viewed once or more times, depending on the level of knowledge of the language. Subtitles in German or other languages (for a cross-linguistic proposal) can also be added. After watching each video segment, the teacher can present a transcript of the dialogues and begin the second phase, in which the communicative functions and the meanings of MPs *ja* and *denn* are discussed in the context of each excerpt. After the first discussion (in groups and afterwards with the whole class), the teacher can introduce the morphologic, syntactic and pragmatic characteristics of MPs *ja* and *denn* through the Descriptive Format (see section 3).

As an example of excerpts that can be worked on in this activity, we introduce two short scenes (the first with one minute and fifteen seconds and the second one with one minute and twenty seconds) from the first ten minutes of the first episode of the series. Both scenes have the occurrence of *ja* and *denn* as MPs, as well as *halt* and *mal* and the combination between *doch* and *mal*:

Scene 1: Presentation (0' until 1'15'')

Aljosha: Queer Eye kommt endlich nach Deutschland.

Ayan: Wie geil ist das **denn**?

David: Ich bin David, Influencer, Hair and Make-up artist.

Jan-Henrik: Kein Plan für Mode? Ich bin Jan-Henrik und bin ein bisschen dandy.

Leni: Ich bin Leni und ich habe richtig Bock, Leute zu helfen, glücklich zu werden.

Aljosha: Ich bin Aljosha, Ernährungsberater, Arzt und Youtuber.

Ayan: Mein Name ist Ayan, ich bin **halt** ein Strahlemann und habe eine Agentur für Interior Design.

David: Das ist mehr als 'ne Makeover-Show, wir kommen zu dir nach Hause und helfen dir dabei, dein Leben aus 'ner neuen Perspektive zu betrachten.

Aljosha: Ich bin so stolz, Teil der Fab Five zu sein und ich kann's kaum erwarten, endlich loszulegen.

Ayan: Hier kann ich das Vorbild sein, das ich als schwuler Türke nie hatte.

Leni: Ich bin non-binary und es ist an der Zeit, dass Deutschland das versteht.

David: Wir wollen **ja** Diversität, oder?

Scene 2: The Fab Five are in Björn's House (5'50'' until 7'10'')

Aljosha: Jetzt geh **doch mal** rein! Geh **doch mal** rein!

Alle: Hallo, Moin, Hi, Hallöchen!

David: Ich bin die David. Schön dich kennenzulernen, lass dich drücken.

Jan-Henrik: Hallo ich bin Jan-Henrik.

Leni: Wie geht es dir?

Roman: Also, mir geht's gut und…

Ayan: Du spielst Fußball?

Roman: n' bisschen, ja.

Ayan: Ihr seid Fussballfans, ne?

Roman: Ja, sieht man **ja** auch ein bisschen.

David: Sag **mal**, weißt du, was wir hier machen?

Roman: Meinem Vater helfen, glaub ich.

Aljosha: Warum braucht er **denn** Hilfe?

Roman: Ich glaub beim Style so 'n bisschen auch 'n bisschen in der Wohnung.

(....)

David: Wir sind schon richtig aufgeregt. Du auch?

Björn: Ja

Ayan: Was erwartest du **denn**?

Björn: Weiß ich gar nicht. Also, **halt** Veränderung auf jeden Fall und n' bisschen Beratung, das ich so 'ne andere Sichtweise über mich bekomm.

David: Wie siehst du dich **denn** im Moment?

Björn: Ähm.. Schüchtern, zurückhaltend, ja, sensibel.

It is recommended to work with each scene individually through global understanding, allow for group and in *plenum* discussions of hypotheses about the function and meaning of MPs in specific contexts, as well as to provide an opportunity to reflect on the main characteristics of the MPs investigated in this article. As it is possible to detect in the dialogues, in addition to the MPs, one can work with a wide variety of important linguistic and socio-cultural topics. In the next section we present some suggestions for production tasks.

4.3 Production

In the last stage of the model, we present some proposals for the elaboration of productions with exercises that can be adapted and presented in full extent so the students can themselves choose which activities best match their interests and types of learning. We suggest that production activities must be open and adaptable, so that students feel motivated to express themselves in the German language, allowing the activity to have a relevant individual meaning (AQUINO & FERREIRA 2023). In the production phase the tasks can also be elaborated as projects (KRUMM 1991; AQUINO 2019) with specific learning goals and expected results. As a suggestion for the activities in this last stage, we divide the proposals into two main goals: to discuss and produce written and oral texts using MPs (specially *ja* and *denn*), to experiment with its communicative functions in different contexts; to produce written and oral texts in open creative production, also encouraging the use of MPs *ja* and *denn*. In the following we present some suggestions for production activities:

Production focusing on MPs *ja* and *denn* function and meaning:

(a) Choose a scene and explain the function of MPs *ja* and *denn*, highlighting their meaning within the context;

(b) Contrast the functions of MPs *ja* and *denn* with its non-modal homonym (speech marker and conjunction), discuss your findings with your colleagues;

(c) Reconstruct a dialogue from a scene with MPs *ja* and *denn* in another language (Portuguese, English, Spanish etc);

(d) Formulate a descriptive format with another MP from the first episode, for example the MP *halt* (Ich habe dann **halt** so gemerkt, dass wir **halt** total ähnlich sind).

Open Production (written and/or spoken) with usage of MP *ja* and *denn*:

(a) How the episode ended? Create a conversation between Björn and the Fab Five using the MPs *ja* and *denn* and any other MP you may consider to fit in the context;

(b) Write a letter to Queer Eye Germany indicating someone for a makeover, try to use at least two MPs (*ja, denn*, *halt*, *doch*);

(c) Record a video telling what you thought of the episode using the MPs *ja* and *denn* or any other MP you may consider to fit in the context.

The activities suggested above can be selected or edited depending on: learning and teaching context; interest about the MPs and language learning; time availability and language knowledge of the subjects. Ideally, the discussions should take place in German, but, if necessary, texts (production or preparation for an oral discussions) can be written in German and presented in Portuguese. The activities can be carried out individually or in groups and part of them can be done as homework. We recommend, though, that most of the work should be developed in the classroom so that the group can have time to discuss together as well as they could better profit from the teacher availability to offer the necessary assistance to the development of the production. At the end, we suggest that the students are invited to present the results of their production to the rest of the class through oral presentations, videos, reading or posting of texts, in other words, any way that seems interesting for the specific learning context.

This exchange of experiences can be very important for collaborative learning, as well as for accessing possible questions and reactions from other learners. For this reason,

it is expected that the production activities allow for a greater participation in class and a more free and creative use of the German language. In this context, the model can stimulate students' interest to watch other episodes of the series and also to continue looking for MPs, increasingly creating a kind of a "radar" for MPs and their communicative function and meaning within specific contexts.

5 Conclusion

Audiovisual tasks involve an experience that goes far beyond word by word understanding. As they were not created for language teaching, authentic materials are situated in the socio-historical context of a discursive community and, therefore, enable a more contextualized critical reflection. Relevant and structured experiences with discourses of the target community allow for a more interesting teaching-learning process, increasing the learner's motivation and participation in their own learning process. In addition, with their considerable extensive workload, it is very complex for teachers to always develop and apply materials and activities that include authentic texts. For this reason, with this article we aimed to introduce and discuss a didactic model with a structured but also flexible sequence of activities with authentic interactions for the teaching of the German MPs *ja* and *denn*.

With authentic themes and discussions, we aimed to create a model that presents an opportunity for critical and reflexive modal MP, allowing students to have a greater interest in the target language and culture. The didactic model presented in this article aims to introduce an organized basis with suggestions for teaching MPs, however, in view of the complexity and critical ability of abstraction needed to process these modal elements, the target group for the model would be students from an academic context (Jung adults) with language knowledge between A2 and B1. Nevertheless, this proposal could also be very relevant for teacher training workshops and courses.

Much work still needs to be done in terms of linguistic research and teaching proposals of German Modal Particles. Approaches like the one in this article aim to start filling this gap by presenting a set of practical activities that bring out the formal and communicative characteristics of MPs. For future work, it would be relevant to develop a didactic model with a contrastive and cross-linguistic perspective. Finally, we hope that this proposal can

offer relevant suggestions on teaching of MPs, opening up new possibilities for the integration of metalinguistic aspects in the GAL classroom in different contexts.

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