

Fourty Years of Particle Research

To commemorate 40 years of German Modal Particle research, a conference co-hosted by Prof Theo Harden, School of Languages & Literatures, was held in Bern, Switzerland from 11 – 13 February. Research in this area began with the seminal work by Harald Weydt on ‘Abtönungspartikeln’, published in 1969.

Prof Harden, as one of the first disciples of the nestor of particle research, Harald Weydt, has been involved in a number of national and international projects on German Modal Particles and is co-author of the first text-book dealing with these unique linguistic elements of the German language, the *Kleine deutsche Partikellehre*.

According to Professor Harden, German Modal Particles are a true challenge for any linguist, as they defy clear classification and have a variety of functions, not only in a syntactic structure, but also on the level of linguistic pragmatics.

60 participants, spanning roughly over three generations of reseachers, from 18 countries came together in Bern to discuss the most recent developments in this particularly difficult field, which seems to provide interesting questions for yet another fourty years.

Theo Harden is Professor of Linguistics and Second Language Studies at the UCD School of Languages and Literatures, University College Dublin. He has published three monographs on various aspects of German Modal Particles.