I will present experimental work on the processing of secondary meaning as conveyed by German modal particles. I will compare the processing of modal particles with the processing of their homophonous counterparts by focussing on one difference: While modal particles contribute use-conditional content (=secondary meaning), their counterparts contribute to the truth-conditional content of the clause they occur in. This difference motivates the assumption of different layers of meaning, as captured in use-conditional approaches. Results of two self-paced reading experiments point to processing differences between the use-conditional meaning of (ten different) modal particles and the meaning of their counterparts which can be explained by the existence of different layers of meaning. A case-study on the two particles nur and bloß in wh-questions further shows that bloß is more accessible in its modal particle reading than nur, indicating a distinction between these otherwise synonymous elements that has not been observed so far.