

Veranstalter.....	Prof. Dr. Peter Siemund
Thema	Speech Acts and Sentence Types [AA-V2, ENG-11, AA-W, AA-M1, AA-M3, AA-M8, AA-M9]
Art der Veranstaltung	Seminar II
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-519
Zeit.....	2st. Di 10-12
Raum.....	Phil 1219
Beginn.....	19. Oktober 2010

In contrast to the traditional view that the function of language is essentially a descriptive one, it is now generally accepted that in speaking we perform actions of various kinds. This is clearest in the case of so-called ‘performative utterances’ like the following: *I (hereby) order you to leave the room / I promise you never to be late again*. Sentences like these are special insofar as their utterance in appropriate circumstances amounts to performing the action identified by the finite verb. The typical formal properties of such sentences in English include first person subjects, second person indirect objects, a present tense non-progressive active form of a speech act verb and the deictic adverb *hereby*. Nevertheless, according to their formal characteristics such sentences would have to be classified as declarative.

For English and many other European languages it has been found useful to distinguish three basic sentence types, namely declarative, interrogative and imperative sentences: *John is taking out the garbage / Is John taking out the garbage? / Take out the garbage, John*. Declarative sentences are primarily and most frequently used for speech acts such as asserting, claiming, stating, but also accusing, criticizing, promising and guaranteeing. Interrogative sentences are typically used for eliciting information, asking questions, introducing deliberations, etc. and imperatives have their basic use in all attempts to get or advise the hearer to do something, i.e. speech acts such as orders, requests, suggestions, prescriptions, appeals, etc.:

There is a well-known problem for the view that the basic sentence types have a certain functional potential or default interpretation. Sentences like *It is terribly cold in this room* and *Could you please close the window?* show that both declaratives and interrogatives can be used to perform directive speech acts. Interrogatives like *Why don't you buy some stocks?* serve as suggestions whereas the same formal type is used to perform an act of criticizing in *Waiter, what's that fly doing in my soup?*

In the course of this seminar we will provide a survey of the state-of-the-art of this highly complex and fascinating field. Topics to be discussed include speech acts (direct/indirect), declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives, exclamatives, minor sentence types, contrasts between English and German, theories of sentence types, and many more.

Requirements: The usual conditions for obtaining a certificate are also relevant for this course (Referat + Hausarbeit).

Reading: You are expected to have read the following article by the beginning of the new semester. It will be made available via Stine as soon as possible:

König, Ekkehard & Peter Siemund (2007) Speech act distinctions in grammar. In: Timothy Shopen (ed.) *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sprechstunde während der Vorlesungszeit:	Di und Do 14-15, Phil 107 (nach Anmeldung)
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