

Veranstalter	Niklas Steih, M.A.
Thema	Speech Act Theory [AA-A1, ENG-4, ENG-4a, ENG-5, AA-V1b, AA-V2b, ASW, MOTION]
Art der Veranstaltung	Seminar Ib
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-509
Zeit	2st. Fr 10-12
Raum	Phil 1219
Beginn	10.04.2015

Course description:

“I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow” (Austin 1962, 5)

Through utterances like the above, we do not simply describe a state of affairs that can be classified as true or false, we rather utter a sentence that is (part of) an extralinguistic action. The notion of performing actions while speaking is an idea that was introduced into linguistics by the work of philosophers Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). The fundamental observation here is that speakers “do things” with their words, while at the same time drawing on concepts such as common background knowledge, rationality, and mutual understanding of politeness.

Today, speech act theory is a well-established part of pragmatics and this seminar will focus on discussing and understanding its foundations and underlying assumptions. We will start by analysing Austin’s view of the language act being divided into three components, the locutionary act (the act **of saying something**), the illocutionary act (the performance **of an act in saying something**), and the perlocutionary act (the **effect** an act has upon the addressee). After having established the basic understanding of speech act theory, we will then move on to Searle’s refinements of Austin’s approach and additional concepts that have been implemented into speech act theory, such as Grice’s (1957, 1967) concept of conversational implicatures. Eventually, we will take into account arguments that have been brought forward against this understanding of speech acts and look at different applications of speech act theory.

Participants are expected to attend regularly, do the assigned reading, give an oral presentation in class and submit a term paper. Furthermore, an outline consisting of the general structure and arguments of the term paper, as well as the literature used, is expected to be handed in by the end of July.

Leistungskontrolle:

- (i) Regular attendance and active participation throughout the course
- (ii) 10-15 min presentation on one topic
- (iii) Term paper to be submitted no later than September 30, 2015

General Literature:

- Austin, J.L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Grice, P. (1957). Meaning. *Philosophical Review* 66, 377-388.
- Grice, P. (1967). Logic and Conversation. In Cole, P. & Morgan, L. (Eds.), *Speech Acts* (pp. 41-58). New York: Academic Press.
- Searle, J.R. (1969). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press