In this paper we present a new approach to lexicographical design for the description of German speech act verbs. This approach is based on an action-theoretical semantic conception. The several conditions for linguistic action provide the basis for the elaboration of the central semantic features. The systematic relationship of these features is reflected in the organization of a lexical database which allows various possibilities of access to different types of lexical information.

In the following paper we shall give an outline of the semantic framework for describing speech act verbs, i.e. verbs of communication, with the practical goal of a semantical database for a (dictionary of) synonymy of German speech act verbs which enables the user not only to find a list of synonymous verbs but also enables him to gain an insight into the semantic relations between the words.

The semantic framework is based on

(i) a set of conditions for performing speech acts as the relevant domain of reference
(ii) the introduction of a notion of situation, or better type of situation

The performative as well as the descriptive use of the verbs can be reduced to their fundamental dependency on the situations in which they are used: on the one hand with regard to the possibility of the action itself, and on the other hand with regard to the possibility of their designation. For both ways of use the relevant aspects of the situation constitute the necessary conditions.

We shall call the verbs designating speech acts, speech activities, and any aspects of linguistic behavior speech act designating verbs or simply speech act verbs. The next phase of our lexical analysis leads us yet a step further. The categories in a model and even the models themselves can be brought into a natural order, if one takes into account how such groups of verbs (categories or models) presuppose each other. The result of the whole procedure of categorization is a typology, a complex structure telling us about the relatedness of speech act designating verbs in two ways: with respect to similarity and with respect to presuppositional ancestry (or simply presupposition). At this point we should glance back to earlier stages of the research in s...
belonging to the set of speech act verbs are characterized by a common semantic base which consists in the fact that they can be used to refer to a certain type of situation which can be roughly described as following: a speaker utters something to a hearer (in the sense of the addressee) with a certain intention. Metonymy is based on a different type of relation between the dictionary and contextual meanings, a relation based not on affinity, but on some kind of association connecting the two concepts which these meanings represent on a proximity. The proximity may be revealed: 1) between the symbol and the thing it denotes. The only reliable distinguishing feature is a structural one: zeugma is the realization of two meanings with the help of a verb which is made to refer to different subjects or objects (direct and indirect). The pun is more independent. Like any S.D. it must depend on a context. But the context may be of a more expanded character, sometimes even as large as a whole work of emotive prose. e.g. - Did you miss my lecture? - Not at all. Grammatically the verb is the most complex part of speech. First of all it performs the central role in realizing predication - connection between situation in the utterance and reality. That is why the verb is of primary informative significance in an utterance. Besides, the verb possesses quite a lot of grammatical categories. Semantic features of the verb. The verb possesses the grammatical meaning of verbiality - the ability to denote a process developing in time. 4. Verbs of a double nature, neither of the meanings are the leading one, the verbs can be used both transitively and intransitively: to drive home - to drive a car; 5. Verbs that are never used in the Passive Voice: to seem, to become