Syntax-pragmatics interface

"Power of entailment": can cancel existential presupposition
entailment = necessary consequence of what is said
The King of England does not exist
preposition: King exists (as in: The King of England smokes)
entailment: King does not exist
• therefore: entailment = less pragmatic more a logical concept
  (1) Evan bought 3 donuts (p)
  (2) Evan bought something (q)
  (3) Someone/bought donuts (r)
  (4) Something happened (t)
p |< q, p |< r, ...

often word stress indicates which entailment should be focal
• focus shift by stress:
  foreground entailment: Evan bought THREE donuts
  EVAN bought three donuts
• focus shift by syntax:
  it-cleft: It was EVAN who bought tree donuts

At the syntax-pragmatics interface

Bridging the gap:
• same proposition corresponds to multiple structures
• different structural types have different discourse functions cf. (adapted from Horn/Ward 2001)
  (1) John did most of the work on that project
  (2) Most of the work on that project was done by John
  (3) Most of the work on that project John did
  (4) What John did was most of the work on that project
  (5) It was John who did most of the work on that project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVO, active</td>
<td>unmarked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive</td>
<td>introduces first given (work) then new (John)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>topicalization = fronting movement for emphasis</td>
<td>links to previous discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wh- or pseudo-cleft</td>
<td>reflect belief of speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cleft sentence</td>
<td>about certain belief of hearer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Syntactic constraints and discourse function

Given and new in discourse

Given = on the topic; new = about the topic
• function of topic marking: to relate a marked utterance to a previously raised topic
• left-dislocated sentences: That car, it is simply amazing
Fred, is he finally coming down?

Constraints of cleft sentences (cf. Levinson 1997:219)

It was his coat that John lost
preposition: John lost his coat
entailment: John lost something
but: It wasn’t his coat that John lost
entailment: John lost something
¬(∃x(Lost(j,x) & (x = jcoat)))
∀k(¬Lost(j,x) & (x ≠ jcoat))
∃k(Lost(j,x) & (x ≠ jcoat))