

Coreference: On the interaction between syntax and pragmatics

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I will argue that pragmatics is not pure pragmatic phenomenon, as envisaged by the classical approach by Reinhart (1983), but can be reduced to binding by a syntactically represented (discourse) antecedent in the topic field of the clause. In particular, I will show that the C-domain plays a crucial role in accounting for valid and invalid cases of coreference. The crucial empirical evidence comes from the licensing of strict and sloppy readings in VP-ellipsis which are argued to follow from an alternative analysis of the role of focus binding in the account of Rooth (1992). A topic hypothesis is proposed which requires that a coreferential expression enters into an Agree-relation with a topic head in the C-domain. Impossible cases of coreference are ruled out as violations of the locality constraint imposed by the syntactic Agree-relation.