

## Discourse syntax

When making an utterance, we often have a choice of different syntactic constructions. We could, for instance, use a declarative clause to report an event:

(1) *The recent storm damaged some buildings in the downtown area.*

However, we could also use different structures that have the same meaning:

(2) *Some buildings in the downtown area were damaged by the recent storm.*

(3) *Some buildings in the downtown area the recent storm damaged.*

(4) *It was the recent storm that damaged some buildings in the downtown area.*

Do speakers have a free choice of which of these constructions to use? Probably not – while (1) and (2) can be used in a variety of discourse contexts, (3) and (4) are much more restricted. So, what determines which of the four clauses above we use? This is the question this class will be looking at. Examining different syntactic patterns, we will focus on the role of pragmatics in English word order. At the same time, students will be given the opportunity to familiarize with different research methods in order to prepare for conducting their own empirical research projects in the second half of the seminar. The projects will be presented to class in the two final sessions of the seminar.

Requirements Studienleistung: Active participation in class and in-group activities, empirical research project & presentation

Requirements Prüfungsleistung: Term paper based on research project

Prerequisites: Since we will be dealing with grammatical structures, this class requires basic knowledge of syntax (constituency + phrase structure).