1. Introduction

The examples in (1) to (6) serve to illustrate some of the kinds of construction that we consider to be amalgam constructions.

(1) They’re doing something different with these chicks than we’ve done with the other penguins,
   is that they’re trying to feed them krill. (SBC)

(2) The thing is that uh,
   since I’m in school,
   I don’t like basically have a monthly budget,
   because I’m living off my dad.
   ... But,
   the thing is that um,
   I have to keep it ... under control? (SWB)

(3) But the thing is that then God gets the glory,
   .. not a president,
   not a king.
   .. And I think that’s a problem for a lot of politicians is,
   they want the glory. (SWB)
(4) And we ... tried breeding him to a mare the other day, and she was going out of heat, wasn’t very strong, and he was just a lot more interested in the gelding next to her, and I said, 
this is what I need is a gay stallion. (SBC)

(5) B: They’ve been trying these people now for twenty-two years, ever since I was a child. 
A: ... Wow. 
B: .. And what they’ve done, is they’ve bought .. Mercedes, after Mercedes, after Mercedes, is what they’ve done. Has nothing to do with justice whatsoever. (SWB)

(6) A: When you think of .. some of the .. best presidents we’ve had, ... in the past, have been people that have struggled to get to the top. I mean they were not rich in, 
B: Uh-huh. 
A: .. in any means. (SWB)

The notions amalgam, intrusion and apo koinou have figured in previous work such as the following.

(7) a. John invited *you’ll never guess how many people* to his party. (Lakoff 1974)
b. John is going to *I think it’s Chicago* on Saturday. (Lakoff 1974)

(8) B: I mean when you look at ... something like the .. Gulf War,  
A: Uh-huh.  
B: that cost us .. *God knows ... how much,*  
    you know at a million dollars a pop for Patriot missiles. (SWB)

(9) And,  
    one of the men .. got,  
    .. uh *I think it was seventeen years,*  
    ... and the other one was in for,  
    uh life imprisonment. (SWB)


(10) a. If you had’v eaten it, you would have died. (Fillmore 1985)  
b. I wish I hadn’t’v said that. (Fillmore 1985)

(11) Yeah it’s like our car industry,  
    you know it would’ve --  
    ... It would’ve --  
    It would’ve gone under .. long time ago,  
    if it hadn’t’v been for the Japanese helping us out. (SWB)

(12) a. There was *a ball of fire* shot up through the seats in front of me. (Lambrecht 1988)
    b. I have *a friend of mine in the history department* teaches two courses per semester.  
       (Lambrecht 1988)

(13) When I go out and I like to splurge on eating,
    I usually like to go out and get some Mexican food,
    and make sure there’s *a .. basket of chips* keeps being replenished on the table. (SWB)


(14) a. And that’s *my big area of interest in linguistics* is discourse. (Ross-Hagebaum 2004)
    b. That’s *what I’m trying to do* is go back to blonde. (Ross-Hagebaum 2004)

(15) A: Do you like uh classic rock,
    or modern rock,
    or which kind?
B: Oh,
    ... I guess it’s stuff that was done more in the seventies.
A: No,
    not a seventies baby.
B: Cause that’s --
    Well no,
    that’s really when I grew up,
    so that’s really *what I like better* is,
    that kind of music,
    I mean. (SWB)
Our data base consists of over 300 tokens of amalgam constructions collected from:
(i) the Switchboard-1 corpus of telephone conversations (SWB),
(ii) the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English, I-IV (SBC),
(iii) movies, sitcoms and other scripted media productions,
(iv) casually overheard utterances, and
(v) the linguistic literature (in particular, previous work on the “Double IS” construction).

Our goal is to propose (at least in outline, and at times still rather tentatively) a syntactic-pragmatic taxonomy of amalgam constructions as they occur in spoken American English.

2. A Taxonomy of Amalgam Constructions

A. Apo Koinou Constructions

Definition of apo koinou: A complex sentential construction consisting of two matrix predications that overlap in a shared argument, the koinon; schematically: A<B>C. The koinon is between angled brackets in the examples. Both components, AB and BC, are clauses and the koinon is an argument in both. The koinon is always a subject in BC.

A.1. Cleft Apo Koinous (A is empty focus marker): [pro+COP <NP> VP]

A.1.1. Presentational-Predicational Cleft

Koinon: Foc>Top.
Inherits: Presentational S, Predicational S.
Basic discourse function: AB introduces a hearer-new or discourse-new referent; BC expresses a predication about it. The apo koinou structure permits one and the same NP to have a focus relation to proposition AB and a topic relation to proposition BC.
a. There was <a ball of fire> shot up through the seats in front of me. (Lambrecht 1988)
b. There’s <about thirty dolphins> have stranded themselves on the beach.
c. Well I have <a friend of mine> called me. (Prince 1981)
d. I have <a friend of mine in the history department> teaches two courses per semester. (Lambrecht 1988)
e. I got <a son> lives in Riverside, and I drove across the Mohave Desert, went to Las Vegas. (SWB)
f. He’s got <half his leg> is weightless.

A.1.2. Specificational Cleft

Koinon: Foc>Foc.

Inherits: Equational or Presentational S, Argument-focus S.

Basic discourse function: AB specifies the value of the variable in a presupposed open proposition (OP). The effect of the apo koinou is to mark proposition BC as having argument focus.

A.1.2.1. Exhaustive Specificational Cleft

a. It was <your husband> paid for that. (Delahunty 1982)
b. It’s <the university> gets the statement.
c. Everything else was fine. It was just <the picture> went crazy.
   (Alternative analysis for [c]: A.3.4.)

A.1.2.2. Non-Exhaustive Specificational Cleft (Lambrecht 2001)

a. You have <Alice Meyer> will be there.
b. (Customer inquiring about flights from Austin to Philadelphia.)
   A: Does SouthWEST go to Philadelphia?
   B: I have NORTHwest goes to Philadelphia.
A.2. Cleftoid Apo Koinous (A is non-empty): [OP₁ <XP> is WH-OP₂]

Koinon: Foc>Foc. OP₁ and OP₂ are semantically identical or related. The koinon can be any phrasal category. The koinon must sometimes be morphosyntactically adjusted to fit its role in BC (e.g. in A.2.1. [f] and [i]).

Inherits: Predicational S (Predicate-focus sentence), Reverse WH-cleft.

Basic discourse function (tentative): Avoid focal discourse-new referent in sentence-initial position. The presupposed WH-relative establishes cohesion with preceding discourse.

A.2.1. OP₁ and OP₂ are identical

a. A: First of all,
   it takes quite a few rolls,
   even in a small room,
   if you’re trying to match ... a design.
   And I --
B: Repeating patterns is what you have to check for,
A: Yes.
B: when you,
   when you buy your paper.
A: That’s what I needed,
   and I didn’t think about that.
   I got <a Mickey Mouse print>,
   is what I got.
B: Yeah.
A: ... And so,
   ... a lot is wasted. (SWB)
b. Willie: Before you do something stupid,
you may want to think about this shit.
Bob: ... What are you talking about?
Willie: ... I’m talking about firing a little black midget.
... Colored African-American small person.
That’s what I’m talking about.
... I’m talking about <your face all over goddamn USA Today>,
is what I’m talking about.
I’m talking about a hundred and fifty of these little motherfuckers,
all over the sidewalk out there,
that’s what I’m talking about.
Little picket signs,
chanting and raving,
using little bull horns,
and shit like that.  (*Bad Santa*)

c. It’s <a moral issue> is what it is.  (*Seinfeld*)
d. I see her <at Central Market> is where I see her.
e. You’re <lazy> is what you are.
f. I want <you to walk across that stage> is what I want.
g. He’ll <try to kill you> is what he’ll do.  (*Southpark*)
h. They’re <trying to eliminate competition> is what they’re doing.
i. I think they <drew names> is what they did.  (*SWB*)
j. They <abuse it> is what they do.  (*SWB*)
k. The technology <made it cheap> is what it did.
l. They <gave us a death sentence> is what they’ve done.  (Different TA-values)
A.2.2. OP₂ is lexical variation of OP₁

a. B: What kind of music do you enjoy?
   A: ... Um,
   
   *I really enjoy <the oldies>,
   is what I really listen to most of the time.*

   B: .. Like,
   what what kind of oldies? (SWB)

b. They call it <a video CD> is what you’re talking about.

c. I built it <in the year two thousand> is when the frame went up.

d. I guess it was <in the mid-80s> was when I was there. (It was = The time was)

e. It’s <the hoarseness> is why I went. (It’s = The reason is)

A.2.3. OP₂ is a metalinguistic comment on (a part of) OP₁ (Related to A.3.5.2.)

a. B: That’s worked pretty well.
   ... Uh,
   uh,
   with uh,
   .. *with the router you can make nice uh,*
   ... *I guess <dado joints> is what it’s called.*

   A: Right. (SWB)

b. Peter Jackson: *You have to do <tie downs>,
   is what they’re called,*
   where the,
   the feet are attached firmly ... *(King Kong, Special Features DVD)*
A.3. Non-Cleft Apo Koinous

A.3.1. [That, ’s <XP> is XP]

Koinon: Top>Top. A and C are coreferential and both focal. The koinon XP can be a WH-relative or an NP. XP, can be an NP, PP, (to-)Inf, that-S, or bare S.

Inherits: Reverse Equational S, Equational S.

Basic discourse function: Exploit the special force of a sentence-initial pronominal focus, then provide the referent of the pronoun at the end. IS has colon function.

A.3.1.1. Koinon is WH-Rel

Inherits: Reverse WH-cleft, WH-cleft.

a. That ’s <where we still have to eat> is the Raven Grill.
b. That ’s basically <how those people got around> was on airboat.
c. That ’s <what I want to do> is to go swimming.
d. That ’s <what I was about to say> is that everyone needs to be tested. (Ross-Hagebaum 2004, SWB)
e. That ’s <where I get my TV news> is on the Daily Show.
f. Is that <what you usually use in the house> is latex? (SWB) (Yes/no-question)

A.3.1.2. Koinon is NP

Inherits: Reverse Equational S (subject is argument focus), Equational S.

a. That ’s <my big area of interest in linguistics> is discourse. (Ross-Hagebaum 2004)
b. That ’s <the only movement he was making> was with his arms.
c. Well I think that ’s <the only thing you can do> is just .. say no and mean no and not be tempted. (SWB)
d. That ’s <my goal in life> is to make you an optimist.
e. That ’s <the one good thing about getting a geology degree> is you get to do a lot of field trips.
That was <my mistake> is that I let her take the stage.

A.3.2. [\text{pro}, \text{is} <\text{XP}> \text{is} \text{XP},]

Koinon: Foc>Top. A and C are coreferential.
Inherits: Predicational S with anaphoric pronominal subject, Equational S.
Basic discourse function: Referent-specifying. Related to A.3.1. (That,\text{’}s <\text{XP}> \text{is} \text{XP},), but has different topic-focus articulation. IS does \text{not} have colon function.
Note: Some of the examples in A.3.2. have an alternative analysis as Intrusion constructions (see Section B. below).

a. It’s <the first National Park in the States> is Yosemite.
b. It’s <a very common concept> is people whose feet stink.
c. It was <one of the items on the screen> was today is German-American Day.
d. It’s all <in Colorado Springs> is their training camp. (Koinon is PP)
e. Yes, which is <the problem with the phonology paper> is that I was starting from scratch. (Massam 1999)
f. I guess that was <a difference between me and you> was that I always thought with Sylvia it would be over at some time. (Lambrecht 1988)
g. That can’t be <a very welcome outcome> is that rates will now rise. (McConvell 1988)
h. I don’t think that’s <a good choice> is to get involved so early.
i. That’s <harder than writing a paper> is to give a twenty-minute talk. (Koinon is AP)
j. This is <a big thing that came up> is that you have to maintain authority.

A.3.3. Pivot Apo Koinou: [OP <NP> VP]

Koinon: Foc>Top. OP is fully lexical, A and C are not coreferential.
Inherits: Predicational S.
Basic discourse function: A discourse-new referent is introduced as the focal object in a predicate-focus sentence and then becomes the topical subject of another predicate-focus sentence.
a. Otherwise, the second Summer Chills play is *Spider’s Web* by Agatha Christie would be good too.
b. It also looks like *this one* is exactly like the MD-DR7.
c. You can take *an anti-inflammatory medicine* usually is the best thing.
d. I have to do *the French homework* is to watch a movie.
e. We got invited to *one guy* practically roasted a goat in his, in his dorm room. (SWB)
f. Because it’s *Linda’s information* is there too.
g. We talked about *circumcision* will be done the next morning.
h. Everything else carries *a risk of infection* is a big concern.
i. When you think of .. *some of the .. best presidents we’ve had, .. in the past,* have been people that have struggled to get to the top, I mean they were not rich in, .. in any means. (SWB)
j. Did everyone find *the bathrooms* are by the elevator.
k. What I’d really like to do is to get *a large database with all that information on computer* would be the ideal thing. (Tuggy 1996) (Scope of koinon?)

A.3.4. Situation-Explaining Apo Koinou: [It’s <NP> VP]

*Alternative analysis: [It’s S]*

*Inherits: It’s NP, S.*

*Basic discourse function: IT anaphorically refers to a situation which BC explains.*

a. It’s *<my BURN blisters>* just broke. (Koinon: Foc>Foc)
b. My lips aren’t sticking out. It’s just *<my EYES>* are half closed. (Koinon: Foc>Foc)
c. It’s *<those MUSTACHES>* just KILL me. (Koinon: Foc>Top)
d. I think it’s just *<the FABRIC>* seems really STIFF. (Koinon: Foc>Top)

A.3.5. Hedging Apo Koinou: [OP <XP> OP]

*Koinon: Foc>Foc.*

*Inherits: Predicational S, Focus-preposing S.*
Basic discourse function: Speaker hedges a given expression (hence the typical pause).

**A.3.5.1. Focus-Preposing Apo Koinou.** (Focus is in COMP)

A.3.5.1.1. Without evidential marker

a. This is your .. <PERI-BOTTLE> we call it.
b. I had a friend who did a lot of mission work .. <in ZAIRE> it was.

A.3.5.1.2. With evidential marker (in italics) (dual categorization, see B.3.)

a. I went to a conference <in ..BOSTON> I guess it was.
b. She spent a week <in New MEXICO> .. I think it was, at a spa.
c. I went on <a wild HAGGIS chase> .. I guess you can call it.
d. I’m very happy about the letter that I got <YESTERDAY> .. I believe it was.
e. I had an argument .. recently <with my BOSS>, I think it was, about the need for women to work. (SWB)

A.3.5.2. Focus is Subject

A.3.5.2.1. Without evidential marker

a. She doesn’t want him to walk with .. <Janet> is her name.
(bf. also example A.2.3. [b])

A.3.5.2.2. With evidential marker (in italics) (dual categorization, see B.3.)

a. I had seen them at the Satellite Lounge .. and <the Blue Iguana> I think was the first time.
b. You know, from an economic point of view it has increased our ... debt, ... um tremendously, ... to the tune of ... somewhere on the order of <five to ten billion>, .. I believe .. is the number. (SWB)
c. The one that I have now, ... uh, ... has a lot more <amenities>, ... I guess ... is the right word, than the one that I moved out of. (SWB)
d. So the heirs to her estate, ... after fifty years, .. picked .. this <Alexandra Ripley>,

*I think* is her name, .. to write the sequel. (SWB)

(cf. also example A.2.3. [a])

**A.3.6. Question-Answer Apo Koinou**

*Koinon*: Top>Top.

a. Where’s <the African bookstore> is on Durant, isn’t it?

b. Do we actually know what <the point of Andrei’s visit> was to get some writing done?

c. A: You know <what impressed me tonight>?

B: Mhm.

A: Is the way you talk to people. (*Kinsey*)

d. You know <what we should do>? Is we should rent a car this weekend and go visit him.

(*Will and Grace*)

e. You know <what’s good> is hibiscus cooler. .. That stuff is great. (SBC)

f. Do you know <what I would love> would be some pancakes.

**A.3.7. Exclamative Partial-Total Question Apo Koinou: [WH, <OP> XP]***

*Koinon*: Top>Top.

A formal argument for amalgam status is that in (a), “What are you?” is odd in isolation.

a. What <are you> drunk?

b. What <are you> nuts?

c. Who <do you think> you are my mother?

d. What <do you think> we have bath towels?
B. Intrusion Constructions

Definition of intrusion: A grammatical morpheme or sequence of morphemes (‘ve, is, is that, but also certain kinds of open proposition) is inserted into an otherwise complete and well-formed construction, adding a semantic or pragmatic nuance to the proposition. The intrusion may trigger a category change in the element that follows the intruder; the intruder is underlined in the examples.

B.1. ‘VE Intrusion (Intruder is grammaticalized truncated auxiliary HAVE)

Formal feature: This type differs from all others in that the intrusion occurs within a complex verb form.

Basic discourse function: Marking counterfactuality.

a. If you had’ve eaten it, you would have died. (Fillmore 1985: 74)
b. I wish I hadn’t’ve said that. (Fillmore 1985: 75)

B.2. IS Intrusions (Intruder is copula BE)

Basic discourse function: BE is an assertion marker, i.e. it marks the proposition it introduces as pragmatically asserted. (However, this does not hold for B.2.4.)

B.2.1. Double IS Constructions (Equational sentences)

Basic discourse function: Accommodates as presupposed and topical a state of affairs which functions as an evaluative or evidential background for an assertion to follow. The intruding BE functions as a colon.

B.2.1.1. WH-Cleft IS Intrusion: [WH-Rel is is (that) S]

a. What I’m thinking is is that I may need a Research Assistant. (McConvell 1988: 287)
b. What really bothers me is is that it’s going to mean a lot more work. (Tuggy 1996: 714)
c. So what they DO is is that they, they cancel the insurance, and then all the people don’t have any insurance coverage. (SWB)
d. What I’m saying IS is that, as we ... promote life, and promote a culture of life, ... surely there are ways we can work together to reduce the number of abortions. (George W. Bush, October 13, 2004)
e. Every student is gonna be involved. ... And then what happens IS is that they start ... promoting advanced courses. (George W. Bush, August 29, 2002)

B.2.1.2. Equational IS Intrusion: [NP is is (that) S]
a. The trouble is is that he keeps making mistakes. (Bolinger 1987: 40)
b. The problem is is that we can’t find the evidence. (Massam 1999: 335)
c. The sad thing IS is that costs have gone up so much.
d. The point IS is I don’t know where to find it.
e. Now the problem IS is that nobody’s going to invade anybody else’s boundaries. (Brenier and Michaelis 2005: 48, SWB)
f. Well the thing IS, is that I live in a dorm. (SWB)
g. The thing IS, is everybody always looks so good on that show. (SWB)
h. Now the question IS is, .. was there injustice in .. Vietnam, or was there injustice in Iraq and Kuwait? (SWB) (Example [h] demonstrates main-clause character of S.)

B.2.2. Noun Complement IS Intrusion: [OP is (that) S]
S is Noun complement, which would require a that complementizer without the intruded IS. IS does not clearly function as colon.

Basic discourse function: IS links two pragmatically asserted propositions.
a. The fact remains is the people’s living standards are being cut. (McConvell 1988: 302)
b. And there’s also the growing realization is that S.
c. I have the problem right now is that I’m shocked that it’s 7 o’clock.
d. I made the point once before is that we have to work on this committee. (McConvell 1988: 302)

**B.2.3. Cataphoric IS Intrusion: [S is (COMP)S]**

**Basic discourse function**: IS (COMP) S provides the referent for a preceding cataphoric expression (in italics). As in B.2.2., IS links two pragmatically asserted propositions, i.e. the first S is not topical and presupposed. The meaning of IS resembles that of “i.e.” or “namely”, i.e. IS functions as a colon.

a. I think we have to do this, at least logically, is we have to go back to the way it was. (Massam 1999: 345)

b. You see that again and again is that phonologists come up with theories for English which just don’t work for Tiberian Hebrew. (Massam 1999: 345)

c. Can I simply say this, is that the parliamentary process is a difficult one. (McConvell 1988: 302)

d. One thing really worries me about the whole proposition is that James doesn’t really know how high the costs can escalate. (Tuggy 1996: 734)

e. They’re doing something different with these chicks than we’ve done with the other penguins is that they’re trying to feed them krill. (SWB)

The following examples have dual categorization (as apo koinou and intrusion):

f. Then I would ask <one more question> is, if you had all the personnel you need, how much longer would it take? (Tuggy 1996: 736)

g. There’s <one thing that struck me> is that S. (Bolinger 1987: 40; see A.1.1.)

h. I want to recommend <something that might help> is that you must say to them when you are available before the committee is struck. (Massam 1999: 345)

i. Here’s <the sad part of the whole thing> is that it’s a little hypocritical.
j. I have <my routine> is that first I do weights, then I play a few games of racquetball with Randy, and then I finish with a sauna. (see A.1.1.)

k. That raises <another issue> then is whether this restructuring would mean the bylaws would have to be changed. (Tuggy 1996: 736)

l. Kind of gets back to <the second request we’ve been asked to look at> is must criminal cases require an anonymous verdict? (SWB)

m. And there’s <one little problem> is that I have a spring under my house. (see A.1.1.)

B.2.4. Subject Extraposition IS Intrusion

Basic discourse function (tentative): The focus marker IS prevents the otherwise possible right-dislocation reading (in which case the initial it would be referential). IS is focus marker but not an assertion marker (the that-clause proposition can be presupposed).

a. It surprises me is that she wants it so badly now when last week it was the farthest thing from her mind. (Tuggy 1996: 733)

b. It’s so ironic, .. is that they go in there and they lose weight. (SWB)

B.3. Evidential OP Intrusion (Lakoff Amalgams)

This construction involves a koinon which does not straddle two OPs, as in Section A (i.e. A<B>C), but which functions both as a (subject or object) complement of the matrix predicate and as an object of an intruded evidential predicate (underlined).

a. John invited you’ll never guess <how many people> to his party. (Lakoff 1974: 321)

b. John is going to I think it’s <Chicago> on Saturday. (Lakoff 1974: 324)

c. And one of the men .. got, .. uh, I think it was <seventeen years> ... and the other one was in for, uh life imprisonment. (SWB)

d. Anyway then you go in on this it’s like a <parquet floor> and then ... (Hopper 2001: 113)

e. <At the age of thirty .. two>, I think it was, his .. um .. heart was that of a fourteen-year old. (SWB)

f. <Rick Johnson>, I believe is his name, is supposed to come in later today.
B.4. WHAT-Cleft OP Intrusion (Tentative categorization)

General syntactic feature: The OP intrusion results in making the complement of BE a complete S.

Basic discourse function: Speaker creates a topical common ground with an initial WH-clause to introduce an assertion to follow. The predicate of the WH-clause has low communicative dynamism or is quasi-empty. Functionally, B.4. is related to B.2.1.1. and B.2.1.2. IS does *not* function as a colon.

**B.4.1. OP1 and OP2 are lexically identical: [What OP1 is OP2 XP]**

a. What it is is it’s a safe investment.
b. What they are is they’re dumb.
c. What you are is you’re always trying to smooth everything over. (Philip Roth, *American Pastoral*)
d. What we need now is we need more data.
e. What we need is we need to help people find work in a legal way. (George W. Bush, March 4, 2004)
f. You know, ultimately what you want is you want all economy to be growing at a pretty sustainable non-inflationary rate.

**B.4.2. OP1 is pro-form of OP2: [What OP-pro1 is S1]**

The WH-Rel contains pro-verb DO, announcing the lexical content of S.

a. What we did was we waived our right to appeal.
b. But what the government has done is it has increased the duty to eight per cent.
c. What they do is they maximize the clock.
d. What we’re gonna do is we’re gonna ask Houstonians to put a smile on their faces.
e. Now what I have done, .. is, ... I have forwarded my home phone, to the answering ... service at the office. (SWB)
B.4.3. Haplology

a. What Mars is ( ) it’s cold and dry. (Haplology of type B.4.1.)
b. What they did ( ) they popped the back of Jim’s watch. (Haplology of type B.4.2.)

C. Some Instances of Amalgam Recursion

a. Our judicial system is in such .. total chaos. I tell you <what they need to do>, is they need to somehow .. take .. the money out of it. (SWB)
b. And what they’ve done is they’ve <bought .. Mercedes, after Mercedes, after Mercedes>, is what they’ve done. Has nothing to do with justice whatsoever. (SWB)
c. You know <what we should do>? Is we should rent a car this weekend and go visit him. (Will and Grace)
d. That’s <what they’re doing when they sneeze>, is they’re getting rid of the salt. (SBC)
e. I thought he was the owner, but, it turns out my mom said that, .. he’s part owner, but he must own the biggest chunk. Because that’s <all you hear about> is, .. uh you know, about <Neal Bush>, I think is his name. (SWB)

D. Not Yet Categorized: [S is NP] (see also A.3.4.)

The issue here is, to what extent a bare S can serve as a subject argument.
Discourse function: Allows a sentential subject to be construed as non-presupposed.

a. I like variety is my problem.
b. I don’t have the keys to the house is my only problem.
References


Massam, Diane. 1999. “Thing is constructions: the thing is, is what’s the right analysis?” English Language and Linguistics 3/2: 335-352.


