

# Verb Phrase Anaphora in Danish: Deep or Surface?

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## Goal

To understand the seemingly paradoxical properties of Danish Verb Phrase Anaphora.

## Deep anaphors

Do it anaphora.

- (1) Sally **ate a durian** but Mike couldn't do **it**.

Null Complement anaphora.

- (2) I asked Bill **to leave** but he refused  $\Delta$ .

(Also, *one* anaphora.)

Overt VP anaphor, *det*, that appears in situ (5) or fronted with V2 (6).

- (5) Han siger han kan **hækle**, men selvfølgelig kan han ikke **det**.  
he says he can crochet but of.course can he not DET  
'He says he can crochet, but of course he can't.'
- (6) Han siger han kan **hækle**, men **det** kan han ikke.  
he says he can crochet but DET can he not  
'He says he can crochet, but he can't.'

Is *det* deep or surface anaphora?

## Surface anaphors

Verb Phrase Ellipsis.

- (3) José **likes pears** and Holly does [~~like pears~~] too.

Sluicing.

- (4) **Ann saw** somebody but I don't know who [~~Ann saw~~].

(Also, NP-Ellipsis.)

## VPA as Deep Anaphora

✓ *det* is overt; there are no uncontroversial instances of an overt surface anaphor.

✓ No internal argument  $\bar{A}$ -extraction. This follows if *det* is atomic.

- (7) \*Jeg ved hvem Susan **kildede**, men jeg ved ikke **hvem** Palle gjorde **det**.  
I know who Susan tickled but I know not who Palle did DET  
Intended: 'I know who Susan tickled but I don't know to whom Palle did.'

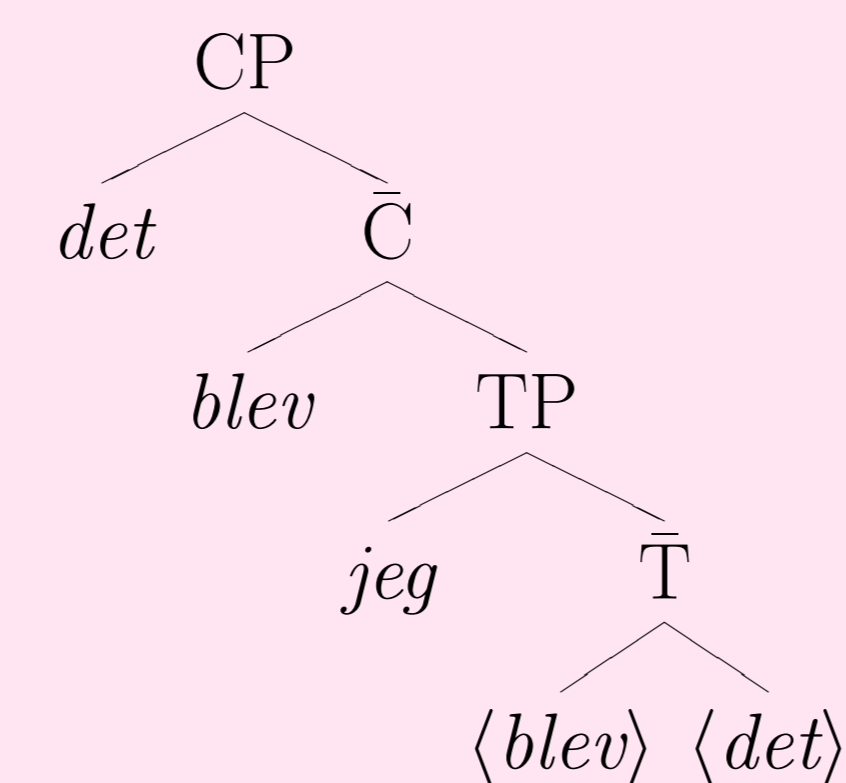
⇒ What about the subjects of unaccusative and passive verbs, e.g. (8–9)?

- (8) Bare det ville **bryde sammen lige nu!** Men **det** gjorde det selvfølgelig ikke!  
just it would break together right now but DET did it of.course not  
'If only the train would break down right now! But of course it didn't!'
- (9) Det var første gang, jeg ønskede at blive **afsat**, og **det** blev jeg.  
it was first time I wanted to become dismissed and DET became I  
'It was the first time I had wanted to be dismissed and I was.'

⇒ Maintaining a deep anaphora analysis for *det* requires us to make nonstandard assumptions about where these subjects originate.

⇒ All subjects including passive and unaccusative subjects must originate in Spec-TP.

⇒ This entails abandoning the UTAH, since arguments with different thematic roles would originate in the same structural position.



## VPA as Surface Anaphora

✓ VPA exhibits the Missing Antecedent Phenomenon.

- (10) Jeg har aldrig **redet på en kamel**, men **det** har Ivan og han siger at **den** stank forfærdeligt.  
I have never ridden on a camel but DET has Ivan and he says that it stank terribly  
'I have never ridden a camel, but Ivan has and he says it stank terribly.'

✓ VPA strongly prefers a linguistic antecedent.

- (11) [A and B are observing C struggling to swim in a pool]  
A: # **Det** kan jeg heller ikke.  
DET can I either not  
Intended: 'I can't swim either.'

✓ VPA requires parallelism in transitivity between the target and antecedent clauses.

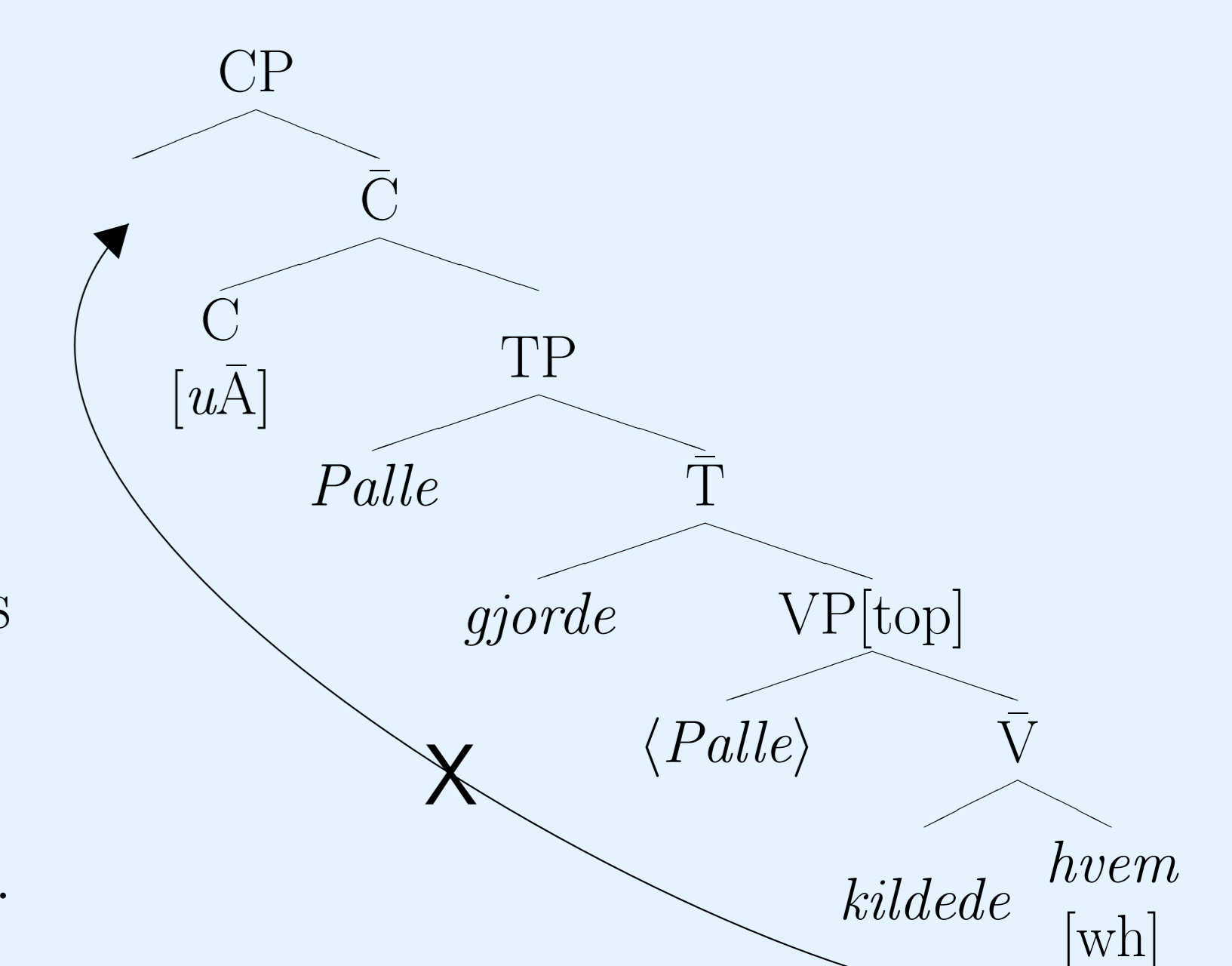
- (12) \*Jeg ville **hænge hesteskoen over døren** og **det** gør den nu.  
I wanted hang horseshoe-the over door-the and DET does it now  
Intended: 'I wanted to hang the horseshoe over the door and it hangs there now.'

⇒ If *det* is a surface anaphor, we expect  $\bar{A}$ -extraction out of it to be good (Schuyler 2001) but it isn't, e.g. (7). This suggests that *det* is a deep anaphor.

⇒ The analysis of *det* as surface anaphora can be saved if we attribute the ungrammaticality of (7) to a violation of locality.

⇒ Assuming that VP is topic-marked since it is given (cf. Merchant 2001), it is eligible for movement to Spec-CP, e.g. (6), as is the wh-word *hvem*.

⇒ By locality (in the sense of Epstein et al. 1998), VP will be closer to C than any discourse-marked element contained within it.



## Conclusion

Despite appearances, *det* is a surface anaphor.