1 Introduction

Danish has an overt VP anaphor \textit{det} (= 3rd singular neuter pronoun; glossed \textit{det}), which is licensed by an auxiliary. In non-verb-second clauses (= most embedded clauses), \textit{det} invariably surfaces in situ:

\begin{itemize}
  \item in situ (with or without object shift across negation): \[ \text{subject auxiliary (neg) det (neg)} \]
  \item or clause initially: \[ \text{det auxiliary subject (neg)} \]
\end{itemize}

Depending on context, fronting of VP anaphor is obligatory, optional, or impossible.

Claims:

1. Fronting pattern challenges Minimalist conception of movement: suppressing anaphor movement where impossible requires look-ahead.

2. Fronting pattern follows from three ranked, violable constraints:

   \textbf{Antecedent}: An anaphor has an accessible antecedent, i.e. an anaphor has an antecedent and the anaphor does not precede and c-command its antecedent (Hankamer and Sag, 1976).

   \textbf{TopFirst}: Topic is clause initial, i.e. if a syntactic constituent is topic it is clause initial (= in Spec-CP; cf. Costa 2001:176).

   \textbf{SubjFirst}: Subject is clause initial (= in Spec-CP).

Starting assumptions:

- verb second clauses are CPs and initial position is Spec-CP (Vikner, 1995):
• topics are eligible for fronting to Spec-CP
• VP anaphor is invariably topic (Houser et al., 2007)
• other elements vary in topic status, specifiable in the input to constraint evaluation.

2 Anaphor fronting obligatory

If subject cannot be construed as topic, e.g. expletive subject, fronting of det is obligatory:

(2) De spørger om der [findes en billigere løsning], men
they ask whether expletive exist a cheaper solution but
They are asking whether there is a cheaper solution, but
a. *... der gör det ikke.
   expletive does det not
   (= candidate a)
b. ... det, gör der ikke.
   det does expletive not
   ... there isn't.

Constraint evaluation (input chunked into clauses marked by angle brackets; topic status specified in input; constraints that position finite auxiliary in second position suppressed, see Anderson 2000 and Legendre 2001):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&lt; ... VP ... &gt; &lt; SUBJ AUX NEG det=TOPIC &gt;</th>
<th>ANTECEDENT</th>
<th>TopFirst</th>
<th>SubjFirst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. VP</td>
<td>det, AUX subj neg</td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. det, AUX subj neg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Anaphor fronting optional

If subject is construable as contrastive topic, anaphor fronting is optional:

(3) Nogle [klarner sig],
some manage reflexive
Some manage,
a. ... andre gör det ikke.
others do det not
   ... others don't.
b. ... det, gör andre ikke.
det do others not
   ... others don't.

Evaluation for topic construal of subject (TopFirst is violated by any non-initial topic):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&lt; ... VP ... &gt; &lt; SUBJ=TOPIC AUX NEG det=TOPIC &gt;</th>
<th>ANTECEDENT</th>
<th>TopFirst</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. VP</td>
<td>det, AUX subj neg</td>
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<td></td>
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Evaluation for non-topic construal of subject:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>&lt; ... VP ... &gt; &lt; SUBJ AUX NEG det=TOPIC &gt;</th>
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<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Anaphor fronting impossible

If antecedent is contained inside subject, anaphor cannot front:

(4) Udvalget undersøgte boligforholdene for EU-ansatte og committee.DEF investigated housing situations.DEF for EU-employees and The committee investigated the housing situation for EU employees and

a. ... de embedsmænd der ønsker at [bo i Brussel], gör deti.
   the civil servants who wish to live in Brussels do DETi
   ... the civil servants who wish to live in Brussels do (so).
   (= candidate a)

b. ... deti gör de embedsmænd der ønsker at [bo i Brussel].
   det do the civil servants who wish to live in Brussels
   (= candidates b, c)

In (4b) anaphor precedes and c-commands antecedent:

\[ \text{Antecedent requirement, not Principle C effect} \]

If an accessible antecedent is provided, fronting is possible (with deaccenting of subject-internal VP):

(5) Det er dyrt at [bo i Brussel], men det gör de embedsmænd der ønsker at [bo i Brussel].
    it is expensive to live in Brussels but DET do the civil servants who wish to live in Brussels
    It's expensive to live in Brussels, but the civil servants who wants to live in Brussels do (so).

This contrasts with nominal anaphora:

(6) a. *Shei likes Sallyi
    b. *I met Sallyi and shei likes Sallyi.

→ No Principle C for VPs (Sag 1976, Johnson 2001)
5 The Minimalist alternative

- Movement to Spec-CP is driven by uninterpretable feature F on C₀, matched by interpretable F on moving element.

- VP anaphor invariably bears F, expletive cannot bear F → obligatory anaphor fronting in (2)

- Topic subject bears F, and is closer to C than topic VP anaphor → subject fronting in (3a)

- Non-topic subject lacks F → anaphor fronting in (3b)

- (4b) can be filtered out; the challenge is to generate (4a), i.e. to suppress movement of det:
  - antecedent does not intervene between probe and goal, so cannot interrupt movement
  - if subject were topic (= bore F), it would preempt movement of det (by locality), but context does not support topic interpretation of subject.
  - look-ahead: if moving det results in illicit antecedent-anaphor, don’t move det.
  - look-ahead is theoretically undesirable and its implementation is unclear.

6 Conclusion

Positioning of the Danish VP anaphor det is determined by its dual status as topic, which makes it eligible for fronting to initial position, and anaphor, which requires it to have an accessible antecedent. When these conditions conflict, the latter takes precedence. This is straightforwardly modelled in OT by ranking ANTECEDENT over TOPFIRST, but challenges the Minimalist conception of movement, since the position of the antecedent does not affect the featural configuration that triggers movement of the anaphor to initial position.

References


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