



### 2.3 Surface anaphoric

The antecedent is (nearly always) linguistically expressed. This means that VP ellipsis is a *surface anaphor*. Deep anaphors can find their antecedents in phrases that are merely inferred from the context.

- (7) [Chris is trying to turn the chalkboard around.]
- “I don’t think he can do it.”
  - #“I don’t think he can.”
  - “He’s trying to turn the chalkboard around, but I don’t think he can.”
  - “He’s trying to turn the chalkboard around, but I don’t think he can do it.”

#### Challenges to the surface anaphor claim for VP ellipsis:

- (8) a. I will if you will.  
 b. From the movie *The General*:  
     Cahill: You were a gold bar short on your last run. Where the fuck is it?  
     Cahill’s cohort (nervous): Martin, I never would. Jesus, I swear on me mother’s life.

### 2.4 Not picky about morphology

VP ellipsis is grammatically insensitive to some (mostly verbal) morphology (even if speakers are not).

- (9) a. Sue was running, but Bill couldn’t ~~run~~.  
 b. Sue would read the book, but Bill is ~~reading the book~~, right now.  
 c. Sue finished the book, but Bill refused to ~~finish the book~~.
- (10) a. Ali might have been reading, and Cal might too.  
 b. Ali might have been reading, and Cal might have too.  
 c. Ali might have been reading, and Cal might have been too.

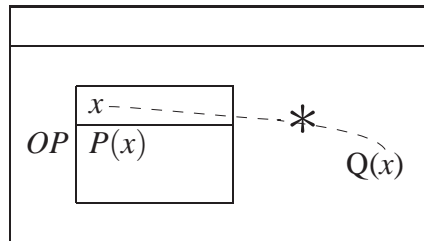
### 3 Hypothesis testing

#### 3.1 Comparison with discourse referents

(11) **Hypothesis**

VP ellipsis is subject to the inaccessibility condition for discourse referents.

- (12) **Inaccessibility** It is impossible to predicate something of a discourse referent  $x$  in a box  $B$  if  $x$  is introduced in a sub-box  $b$  of  $B$ . In a picture:



#### 3.2 Cataphora?

In the usual (anaphoric) case, the antecedent precedes its associated anaphoric expression in discourse. Reversing things tends to get weird:

- (13) a. A woman/Ellen entered. She looked for a seat.  
 b. #She looked for a seat. A woman/Ellen entered.

Cataphora is when the antecedent follows the anaphor in the discourse. Sometimes it works:

- (14) a. After he went to the gym, Sal picked up his laundry.  
 b. Before she knew what was happening, Sue was hit by a falling whale.

(15) **Hypothesis**

VP ellipsis cannot be cataphoric.

#### 3.3 As-parentheticals

(16) **Hypothesis**

As-parentheticals like those in (17) do **not** involve VP ellipsis.

- (17) a. Sue was sick, as was Ellen.  
 b. Sue ran the race, as they said that Ali did.  
 c. Sue has left for the day, as Jane probably has.

## 4 Related constructions

These are worth mentioning for two reasons: (i) knowing about them might help you identify VP ellipsis; and (ii) they might be a rich source of experimental projects.

### Proform ellipsis

- (18) a. Ed ran the race, and Ali did it too.  
 b. Ed ran the race, and Ali did that too.  
 c. Ed ran the race, and Ali did so too.

### Sluicing

- (19) a. That's a cathedral, but I am not sure which.  
 b. Ed got into the class, but I'm not sure how.  
 c. Ali met a philosopher, but she is not sure who.

### Gapping

- (20) a. Chris baked a cake, and Lyn a pie.  
 b. Chris might have baked a cake, and Lyn a pie.

### Pseudogapping

- (21) a. Chris can bake a cake, and Lyn can a pie.  
 b. Cal could see the shore, and Kelly could the steamship.

### Null complement anaphora

- (22) The movie was awful.  
 a. I agree.  
 b. I'm amazed.  
 c. Can it be true?