

Session 3 • Specificational pseudoclefts

- specificational pseudoclefts (henceforth SPCs) are a special subtype of copular sentences — one in which what Higgins (1979) calls the ‘superscriptional’ constituent is usually a *wh*-clause (though it can also be a noun phrase headed by a ‘bleached’ noun like *thing*; we briefly talked about these cases in session 1: see ex. (17) there, and Den Dikken, Meinunger & Wilder 2000:sect. 4.3)
- SPECIFICATIONAL pseudoclefts are *reversible* while PREDICATIONAL ones are not — we saw this already in session 1; the clearest demonstration to this effect is repeated here

(1)	important to himself _i is what John _i is	[SPECIFICATIONAL]
(1')	what John _i is is important to himself _i	
(2)	*important to him _i is what John _i is	[PREDICATIONAL]
(2')	what John _i is is important to him _i	

- in the sentences in (1/1'), *important to himself* specifies a value for the variable in the *wh*-clause — these sentences are equivalent to the simple copular sentences *John is important to himself*
- in the sentences in (2/2'), *important to him* denotes a property attributed to *what John is*, which is read as a referential expression (‘John’s status’)
- importantly, only in (1/1') do we see a word-order alternation — the predicate of a PREDICATIONAL copular sentence must follow the copula
[the above statement is useful only for declarative statements: in interrogatives, T-to-C movement takes the copula to a position to the left of everything in TP, including the subject; and in *wh*-interrogatives in which the predicate is questioned, the predicate ends up in precopular position]

- SPCs with a *wh*<value order have an obligatory copula in contexts in which a copula is not otherwise obligatory — see (3)/(3') (Higgins 1979, Hankamer 1974, Williams 1983, Heggie 1988)
- in this regard, these *wh*<value SPCs pattern exactly like double-DP specificational copular sentences whose superscriptional noun phrase precedes the copula — (4)/(4')

(3)	I consider important to himself _i ?(to be) what John _i is	[SPECIFICATIONAL]
(3')	I consider what John _i is *(to be) important to himself _i	
(4)	I consider the children (to be) the biggest problem	
(4')	I consider the biggest problem *(to be) the children	

- we have already discussed earlier in this seminar how the obligatoriness of the copula can be derived from an analysis of the primed sentences in terms of Predicate Inversion
- the fact that the copula must be present in (3') just as it must be in (4') tells us that SPCs with *wh*<value are derivable via Predicate Inversion
- we have called these ‘**PI SPCs**’
- Den Dikken, Meinunger & Wilder (2000) (henceforth DMW) argue that there is a second strategy for deriving *wh*<value specificational pseudoclefts: a TOPIC–COMMENT structure in which the *wh*-clause is a question in topic position and the comment is the answer to this question
- we have called these ‘**TC SPCs**’

- TC SPCs have a fully clausal (TP) value: the value is the comment, which is always a full clause
- the value can also be smaller than a full TP on the surface — as a result of *ellipsis* in the answer clause, all the way down to the focus of the answer: when ellipsis is applied in (5b), it must affect all of the non-focal material, leaving only the focal direct object behind
[most speakers prefer ellipsis, some — including Higgins (1979:86) — finding their non-elliptical versions ‘irremediably anacoluthic’]

- (5) a. what John ate was (he ate) a watermelon
b. what John gave Mary for her birthday was (he gave her) a book (for her birthday)

- (6) [TopP [CP *what John ate* ~~*what*~~] [Top=*was* [TP (*he ate*) a watermelon]]]

- the copula in TC SPCs is the lexicalisation of the Top-head
- since there is a unique Top-head in the structure and since it can be filled by exactly one word, it is predicted that in SPCs that are unambiguously of the TC-type, copula clusters are impossible
- this prediction is borne out: while (7a), which is amenable to a PI-style parse, is perfectly grammatical, the unambiguous TC SPC in (7b) is impossible¹

- (7) a. what John ate may have been a watermelon
b. *what John ate may have been he ate a watermelon

- the analysis of TC SPCs as question-answer pairs dominated by a TopP (‘self-answering questions’) makes it easy to accommodate SPCs with multiple *wh*-elements (Ross 1999, Meinunger 1997): just as garden-variety *wh*-questions allow multiple *wh*’s, so does the *wh*-clause of TC SPCs; the answer typically requires a list of pairs, though in contexts such as (8b) a single pair is possible (precisely as in question-answer pairs) [more on SPCs with multiple *wh*’s in the APPENDIX]

- (8) a. who ordered what was John (ordered) beer and Bill (ordered) pálinka
b. wer hier wem geholfen hat war die Hilde dem Heinz und nicht umgekehrt (German)
who here whom helped has was the Hilde the Heinz and not other-way-round

- for a PI-style approach, which treats the *wh*-clause of SPCs as a free relative, this kind of multiplicity would be impossible to account for

- since the value in TC SPCs is systematically a clause, this gives them the opportunity to license negative polarity items

¹ The ‘simplicity restriction’ extends to negation: while (i) is fine with a DP value, it is ungrammatical with a full TP. This follows from DMW’s analysis as well: no NegP can be inserted between Top and the value-TP.

- (i) what John ate wasn’t (*he ate) a watermelon

The so-called ‘double-*is*’ construction (*the thing is is that he drinks too much*; cf. *i.a.* Bolinger 1987, Massam 1999) is grammatical in TC SPCs: (ii). I will not discuss the syntax of the ‘double-*is*’ construction here. In light of the fact that the syntactic structure for TC SPCs as proposed in DMW does not leave any space for an additional token of the copula, it seems likely that this additional copula is not the lexicalisation of a functional head in the syntactic structure. The fact that it is preferably *is* (even when the ‘real’ copula is past tense) also suggests that it is not integrated into the syntactic structure the way the ‘real’ copula is. How the tense of the copula in the Top-head of TC SPCs is determined is another question I leave open.

- (ii) what John ate {was/is} is (he ate) a watermelon

- (9a) is difficult to handle as a PI SPC because there is no c-commanding licenser for the NPI-value [several attempts have been made to account for (19a) by collapsing the SPC into a simple clause at LF (Bošković) or even later (Heycock & Kroch); but these attempts are problematic and will not be reviewed here]
- but (9a) is straightforward if analysed along the lines of (9b), a TC SPC: the full-TP value contains a c-commanding licenser for the NPI; PF ellipsis down to the focus yields the surface output in (9a)

- (9) a. what nobody bought was any wine
 b. what nobody bought was nobody bought any wine

[on the status of (9a) and its ilk, see <http://www.usingenglish.com/poll/272.html> — a poll among non-linguist internet users; I will return to NPI-connectivity in SPCs in the **APPENDIX** as well]

- the TC SPC also straightforwardly accommodates case connectivity between the value and the *wh*-clause: the accusative in (10a) is the focus of an elliptical TP-value in a TC SPC; cf. (10b), where accusative case is naturally the only option
- of course, nothing here forces the TC-style derivation: a PI derivation is also available; but on a PI-style derivation, there can be no case connectivity; this accounts for the nominative option in (10a)

- (10) a. was er essen wollte war {ein/einen} Apfel (German)
 what he eat wanted was an(NOM)/an-ACC apple
 b. was er essen wollte war er wollte {*ein/einen} Apfel essen
 what he eat wanted was he wanted an(NOM)/an-ACC apple eat

- in light of the earlier conclusion that NPI-connectivity (as in (9)) is strictly dependent on a TC-parse, it is correctly predicted that NPI-connectivity must go hand in hand with case connectivity

- (11) a. was er niemals kaufen würde ist auch nur einen japanischen Wagen (German)
 what he never buy would is also but one-ACC Japanese car
 b. *was er niemals kaufen würde ist auch nur ein japanischer Wagen
 what he never buy would is also but one(NOM) Japanese car

- note also that since case connectivity requires a TC-style parse, and since the value of a TC SPC is a TP, it is expected that in SPCs with case connectivity there should be no number agreement between the copula and the value: the copula in the Top-head agrees with the TP as a whole, which is not specified for number
- conversely, when there is *no* case connectivity and we are hence dealing with a PI SPC, there *should* be number agreement between the copula and the nominative value
- these predictions are borne out (André Meinunger, p.c.)

- (12) a. *wem wir das zeigen wollen sind den Männern (German)
 who-DAT we that show want are the men-DAT
 b. wem wir das zeigen wollen ist den Männern
 who-DAT we that show want is the men-DAT

- (13) a. wem wir das zeigen wollen sind die Männer
 who-DAT we that show want are the men(NOM)
 b. *wem wir das zeigen wollen ist die Männer
 who-DAT we that show want is the men(NOM)

NB there is a wrinkle in the connectivity-*cum*-agreement argument, however: in English SPCs with NPI-connectivity, number agreement between the copula and the DP value is not impossible (even though number agreement is impossible when the value is a full TP); recall also fn. 4 of handout 1

- (14) a. what nobody has bought {is/*are} nobody has bought any cups and glasses
 b. what nobody has bought {is/*are} any cups and glasses

→ for DMW, (14b) must be analysed as a TC SPC in order to get the NPI licensed
 → the fact that the DP value (the remnant of an elliptical TP) shows no visible case may be sufficient to allow it to control agreement with the copula in Top⁰ — but the account of copula inflection in TC SPCs must then be a very surfacy one (perhaps cf. ‘agreement attraction’, as in *the label on the bottles is/are red*): in narrow syntax, Agree between Top and the remnant of ellipsis ought to be impossible because the DP *any cups and glasses* is no longer active (all its features already having been checked) by the time Top is merged

- note finally that the TopP structure of TC SPCs makes them unembeddable in ECM and raising constructions
- this is correct both for TC SPCs with a full, non-elliptical clausal value and for pseudoclefts that show case- and NPI-connectivity effects (for which a TC parse is required)

- (15) a. I consider what John ate to be (*he ate) a watermelon
 b. what John ate seems to be (*he ate) a watermelon

- (16) a. *I consider what nobody bought to be any wine
 b. *what nobody bought seems to be any wine

- for DMW, TC SPCs are ‘self-answering questions’ — question-answer pairs dominated by a TopP, with the question in the SpecTopP and the answer in the complement of Top⁰
- in light of the fact that questions are not normally preceded by their answers, the expectation arises from this that TC SPCs should have a rigid *wh*<value word order
- DMW assert that this is the case — and they exploit this to account for the fact that SPCs with case- and NPI-connectivity show no word-order flexibility, forcing the *wh*< value order

- (17) a. was er essen wollte war {ein/einen} Apfel (German)
 what he eat wanted was an(NOM)/an-ACC apple
 b. {ein/*einen} Apfel war was er essen wollte
 an(NOM)/an-ACC apple was what he eat wanted

- (18) a. what nobody bought was any wine
 b. *any wine was what nobody bought

BUT as we saw in session 1, specificational pseudoclefts with full-TP values CAN have TP<*wh* order
 → both (19a) and (19b) are grammatical with full-TP values (O’Neill 2012)

- (19) a. what he should work on is (he should work on) his attitude
 b. (he should work on) his attitude is what he should work on

- O’Neill (2012) analyses (19b), as well as a whole family of other specificational copular amalgams (SCAs), on the basis of a specifying coordination structure, with the two clauses as conjuncts, one specifying the contents of the other

- nothing in the nature of the specifying coordination analysis would require one of the two clauses to be a question and the other its answer
 - but for SPCs with multiple *wh*-elements, such as the ones in (8), repeated here, the precopular clause *must* be treated as a question: it is only in questions that we ever find multiple *wh*'s (in English or German)
- (8) a. who ordered what was John (ordered) beer and Bill (ordered) pálinka
 b. wer hier wem geholfen hat war die Hilde dem Heinz und nicht umgekehrt (German)
 who here whom helped has was the Hilde the Heinz and not other-way-round
- since questions must logically precede their answers, it is not surprising that SPCs like the ones in (8) are irreversible
- (8') a. *John (ordered) beer and Bill (ordered) pálinka was who ordered what
 b. *die Hilde dem Heinz und nicht umgekehrt wer hier wem geholfen hat (German)
 the Hilde the Heinz and not other-way-round was who here whom helped has
- the fact that SPCs with NPI- and case-connectivity are likewise irreversible (as shown in (17) and (18)), which followed so straightforwardly from DMW's 'self-answering question' approach to TC SPCs, now calls for an updated answer
 - note that the *non-elliptical* version of (18b) *is* grammatical (for speakers who allow these kinds of SCAs)
 [for case connectivity in German I have no data to provide here; SCAs have not been studied in any detail for any language other than English]
- (20) nobody bought any wine is what nobody bought
- so the problem with (18b) seems to have to do with the fact that there is *ellipsis* in the precopular clause: the clause harbouring the NPI is eligible in and of itself to be in precopular position, but when there, it must be spelled out in full
 - we do, of course, find (21a) — grammatical for all speakers, and not an elliptical version of (21b): this example can simply be base-generated as an SPC in which the *wh*-clause is a free relative in the predicate position of the small clause (an 'uninverted PI SPC')
- (21) a. wine is what nobody bought
 b. nobody bought wine is what nobody bought
- but whenever what precedes the copula must be part of a clause (for instance because its licenser is there), that clause must be fully realised
 - apparently, in these constructions, ellipsis inside a clause in a specifier position is disallowed
 - this does not, at first blush, seem to be a generalisation covering all known instances of ellipsis sluicing, which is a kind of ellipsis that is very much like what is needed for (18b) (in that it, too, affects everything besides the focus), is perhaps somewhat difficult in subject questions (which are indubitably in left-branch positions, entirely regardless of whether they occupy the structural subject position, SpecTP, or a specifier position in the \bar{A} -field), but certainly not impossible — (22b)
 - similarly, when the question is topicalised, as in (22c), sluicing is somewhat more difficult than when the question remains in complement position, as in (22a), but again not impossible

- (22) a. he ran away; I don't know why (he did that) he met someone, but I don't know who
 b. he ran away; why (he did that) is unknown ?he met someone, but who is unknown
 c. he ran away; why (he did that), I don't know ?he met someone, but who, I don't know

BUT note that in (22) the identifier of the ellipsis (here *he ran away, he met someone*) precedes the ellipsis site; in (18b), by contrast, the identifier of the ellipsis (*nobody bought*) follows the ellipsis site
 → we can make the sluicing examples parallel (18b) in this respect by reversing the order of the constituent clauses of (22), as in (23)

- (23) a. I don't know why, but he ran away ?I don't know who, but he met someone
 b. why ?(he did it) is unknown, but he ran away ?*who is unknown, but he met someone
 c. why ?(he did it), I don't know, but he ran away ?*who, I don't know, but he met someone

→ here, sluicing remains grammatical in the a-examples, but the sluices in (23b,c) are now much degraded — especially so in the right-hand examples, with an argument-*wh* (where even (23a) is weak)
 → the right-hand examples are particularly relevant in comparison with (18b) because they must involve movement out of the ellipsis site, just as (arguably) in (18b) [see the APPENDIX]
 → the parallel between (18b) and the right-hand examples in (23b,c) suggests that when the identifier of the ellipsis follows the ellipsis site, the elliptical clause must not be in a left-branch position

- I do not profess to know why these facts are the way they are; but at a minimum, the sluicing facts in (23) do seem to suggest that ellipsis in non-complement clauses is subject to more stringent restrictions than ellipsis in complement clauses, which will probably help us understand the contrast between (18b) and (20)

[of course (19b) with just *his attitude* in precopular position is analysable as a PI SPC, w/o ellipsis]
 → to a significant extent, then, DMW were right about the distribution of SPCs with full-clausal values
 → but the claim that they are consistently 'self-answering questions' and have a TOPIC-COMMENT structure is too narrow, as is clear when the broader palette of copular amalgams is taken into account

APPENDIX: more on *wh*-multiplicity and NPI-connectivity, and the nature of ellipsis in reduced TC SPCs

- we saw in (8), repeated below, that English and German allow SPCs with multiple *wh*'s (Ross 1999, Meinunger 1997)

- (8) a. who ordered what was John (ordered) beer and Bill (ordered) pálinka
 b. wer hier wem geholfen hat war die Hilde dem Heinz und nicht umgekehrt (German)
 who here whom helped has was the Hilde the Heinz and not other-way-round

→ Dutch allows SPCs like (8a), though at best marginally: see (24)
 → with single-pair cases in which the two *wh*'s are identical in ϕ -features (as in German (8b)), the result of multiple-*wh* pseudoclefts is considerably better, to my ear: see (25)

- (24) ?wie wat besteld heeft was Jan bier en Wim pálinka (Dutch)
 who what ordered has was Jan beer and Wim pálinka

- (25) a. wie in zo'n geval wie moet helpen is de leerling de leraar
 who in such.a case who must help is the pupil the teacher
 'who should help whom in such a situation is the pupil the teacher'

- b. wie hier feitelijk wie uitlaat is de hond het baasje
who here in.fact who out.lets is the dog the master
'who is actually walking whom here is the dog its master'
- c. wat in deze constructie wat moet volgen is het finiete werkwoord de *wh*-constituent
what in this construction what must follow is the finite verb the *wh*-constituent
'what should follow what in this construction is the finite verb the *wh*-constituent'

→ just as in English and German, these multiple-*wh* SPCs are irreversible: the sentences in (26) are entirely impossible²

- (26) a. *de leerling de leraar is wie in zo'n geval wie moet helpen (Dutch)
the pupil the teacher is who in such.a case who must help
- b. *de hond het baasje is wie hier feitelijk wie uitlaat
the dog the master is who here in.fact who out.lets
- c. *het finiete werkwoord de *wh*-constituent is wat in deze constructie wat moet volgen
the finite verb the *wh*-constituent is what in this construction what must follow

→ there is ample reason, therefore, to believe that these are DMW-style TC SPCs, with a full TP as the postcopular constituent

→ when the surface form features in postcopular position just a (list of) pair(s) of values for the *wh*'s in the precopular clause, the TP is *elliptical*

• Dutch and German are well known to differ from English with respect to the (im)possibility of P-stranding ellipsis (see Merchant's 2001 P-stranding generalisation)

- (27) a. John talked about the situation in Libya, and Mary (about) the situation in Syria
- b. Jan sprak over de situatie in Libië, en Marie *(over) de situatie in Syrië (Dutch)
Jan spoke about the situation in Libya and Marie about the situation in Syria

→ if multiple-*wh* pseudoclefts must be TC SPCs with (optional) ellipsis, and if English but not Dutch allows ellipsis with P-complement remnants, it is expected that English (28) should be grammatical while its Dutch counterpart should not (unless P is not elided)

- (28) who talked about what was Tom ((talked) about) linguistics and Jim (about) philosophy

→ the prediction made for Dutch is borne out

- the examples in (29) are marginal, as is (24), but importantly, to the extent that they work at all, they strongly require the inclusion of the P *over* in the counterweight (regardless of whether the *wh*-word in the complement of P in the *wh*-clause is R-moved, as in (29a), or remains *in situ* to the right of P, as in (29b))³

2 In the case of (26c) this is perhaps more informative than it is in the case of (26a,b): FOCUS<*wh*-clause order is generally not very good in Dutch pseudoclefts with *wie* as the *wh*-word (^{??}*Jan is wie...*); but it is perfectly fine when *wat* is used: *een foto van zichzelf is wat Jan nodig heeft voor zijn paspoortaanvraag* 'a picture of himself is what Jan needs for his passport application'.

3 The inclusion of both (29a) and (29b) is prompted by the fact that, to my ear, the placement and realisation of the *wh*-word has an effect on sluicing with P-complements in Dutch: thus, I find the primed examples in (i) better (with *wat*) than the primeless cases; the only difference between the primed and primeless cases is the fact that the P-complement in the antecedent clause is an R-pronoun in a postpositional PP in the latter but not in the former.

- the single-pair multiple-*wh* cases in (25) also rigorously obey the P-stranding generalisation: (30) is impossible unless the preposition is pronounced in the counterweight
- (29) a. [?]wie waarover gesproken heeft was Tom *(over) taalkunde en Jim *(over) wijsbegeerte
 who where.about spoken has was Tom about linguistics and Jim about philosophy
 b. [?]wie over wat gesproken heeft was Tom *(over) taalkunde en Jim *(over) wijsbegeerte
 who about what spoken has was Tom about linguistics and Jim about philosophy
- (30) a. wie altijd op wie moet kunnen vertrouwen is de leerling *(op) de leraar (Dutch)
 who always on who must can trust is the pupil on the teacher
 ‘who must always be able to rely on whom is the pupil (on) the teacher’
 b. wie voor wie op moet komen is de ouders *(voor) hun kinderen
 who for who up must come is the parents for their children
 ‘who should stand up for whom is the parents (for) their children’
 c. wat in deze constructie op wat moet volgen is het finiete werkwoord *(op) de *wh*-constituent
 what in this construction on what must follow is the finite verb on the *wh*-constituent
- confirming expectations as well is the fact that, for the majority of speakers interviewed,⁴ the licensing of an NPI in the counterweight requires that the preposition be supplied in the counterweight: while (31a) is fine with or without the preposition *aan*, (31b) requires *aan* for most speakers; the variant of (31b) lacking *aan* in the counterweight is strongly rejected by almost all informants⁵
- (i) a. ik zat ergens over na te denken, maar ik herinner me niet meer {^{??}wat/*waar/∕ waarover} (Dutch)
 I sat somewhere about PRT to think but I remember me not more what/where/where.about
 a'. ik zat over iets na te denken, maar ik herinner me niet meer {[?]wat/*waar/∕ waarover}
 I sat about something PRT to think but I remember me not more what/where/where.about
 ‘I was thinking about something, but I don’t remember what’
 b. ik zat ergens aan te werken, maar ik herinner me niet meer {^{??}wat/*waar/∕ waaraan}
 I sat somewhere on to work but I remember me not more what/where/where.on
 b'. ik zat aan iets te werken, maar ik herinner me niet meer {[?]wat/*waar/∕ waaraan}
 I sat on something to work but I remember me not more what/where/where.on
 ‘I was working on something, but I don’t remember what’
- 4 I sent a questionnaire around to eleven native-speaker linguists on 25 March 2013. Four informants report no contrast between the a– and b–sentences in (31); of these, two accept all versions (with and without P) while the other two reject both versions of (31b) while accepting both versions of (31a). For all other informants except one (who rates the P-less versions of both (31a) and (31b) higher than the ones that contain *aan*), there is a significant effect of the presence or absence of P for (31b) (with the NPI) but not for (31a), of the type indicated in the examples: (31a) is fine regardless of whether P is included or not, but (31b) requires the presence of P. I should note, for completeness’ sake, that almost all informants accepted (i) (seven informants gave it a 5, the highest score; one gave it a 4, and one gave it a 3; only two informants rated the sentence as falling below the acceptability threshold: 2).
- (i) wat ik nooit zou willen lezen is *ook maar één* artikel over pseudoclefts (Dutch)
 what I never would want read is also but one article about pseudoclefts
 ‘what I would never want to read is any article about pseudoclefts’
- 5 The P-effect is traceable even in question-answer pairs, though QAPs in Dutch generally seem quite averse to NPIs as fragment answers. Thus, while there is no significant difference between (ia) with *aan* in the answer and without it, all but three informants find (ib) markedly worse without *aan* in the answer.
- (i) a. waar zou je nooit aan willen meewerken? — (aan) een project over pseudoclefts
 where would you never on want with.work on a project about pseudoclefts
 b. waar zou je nooit aan willen meewerken? — *(aan) *ook maar één* project over pseudoclefts
 where would you never on want with.work on also but one project about pseudoclefts

- (31) a. waar ik nooit aan zou willen meewerken is (aan) een project over pseudoclefts
 where I never on would want with.work is on a project about pseudoclefts
 ‘what I would never want to collaborate on is (on) a project on pseudoclefts’
 b. waar ik nooit aan zou willen meewerken is *(aan) ook maar één project over pseudoclefts
 where I never on would want with.work is on also but one project about pseudoclefts
 ‘what I would never want to collaborate on is (on) any project on pseudoclefts’

→ there does not seem to be a ‘P-effect’ in English specificational pseudoclefts with NPI-counterweights: (32) is fine without *on* (better, in fact, than its counterpart with *on* included)

(32) what I would never want to work on is (on) *any* project on pseudoclefts

- the contrast between Dutch and English with respect to the ‘P-effect’ (both in the realm of *wh*-multiplicity and in the domain of NPI-licensing) can be accounted for on the basis of the PI/TC SPC distinction discussed above
 - SPCs of the type in (31a), with ‘plain’ values, support a PI derivation; the value of a PI SPC whose *wh*-clause generates the *wh*-operator inside a PP can be either a simple DP or a PP
 - SPCs of the type in (31b) and (32), with NPI-values, require a full-TP postcopular constituent, hence a TC parse
 - SPCs of the type in (28)–(30), with multiple *wh*’es, also require a full-TP postcopular constituent, hence a TC parse
 - in the TC SPCs in (28)–(30) and (31b)/(32), *ellipsis* is responsible for the fact that only the constituent denoting the value(s) of the *wh*-operator(s) surface(s)
 - such ellipsis obeys Merchant’s (2001) P-stranding generalisation: P-stranding ellipsis is possible in English but not in Dutch (or German, not exemplified here)
 - while English (28) and (32) are grammatical without P included, Dutch (29)–(30) and (31b) succeed only with P pronounced

NB Merchant derives his P-stranding generalisation from a particular approach to ellipsis
 → the material escaping ellipsis of a phrasal constituent that underlyingly dominates this material is removed from the constituent marked for ellipsis; what is elided is the remnant left after movement
 → this approach to ellipsis elides *all* of YP — CONSTITUENT ELLIPSIS: ellipsis targets entire syntactic constituents integrally
 → this is different from Wilder’s approach to ellipsis, adopted in DMW’s work — STRING ELLIPSIS: ellipsis targets a string of contiguous linguistic material, not necessarily a single syntactic constituent

- (33) $[_{XP} \text{STRANDED MATERIAL}_{i,j} [X (...) [_{YP} \langle t_i \rangle \text{ELIDED MATERIAL} \langle t_j \rangle]]]$ (constituent ellipsis)
 (34) $[_{YP} \langle \text{STRANDED MATERIAL} \rangle \text{ELIDED MATERIAL} \langle \text{STRANDED MATERIAL} \rangle]$ (string ellipsis)

- since the string ellipsis approach does not derive the P-stranding generalisation, which does appear to be in effect in TC SPCs, TC SPCs have to be analysed in terms of constituent ellipsis, *à la* (33)
 → this means that *even NPIs can be extricated from ellipsis sites via movement* prior to ellipsis — despite the fact that NPIs are normally ineligible for movement out of the c-command domain of their licensing negation: contrast (35a) with (35b); only in the latter does the fronted NPI remain within the c-command domain of the licensing negation

- (35) a. **any* books, Dubya has *never* read
 b. I *don’t* think that under *any* circumstances would he do such a thing

- note that (35a) differs from (35b) not just with respect to the fact that in the former but not in the latter, the NPI is moved out of the c-command domain of its licensing negation
 - in (35a), the fronted constituent containing the NPI is a TOPIC whereas in (35b) is it a FOCUS (see the subject-aux inversion in the embedded clause in (35b), and the lack thereof in (35a))
 - the problem with (35a) is not just that the NPI is removed from the c-command domain of its licensing negation on the surface, but also that the operation by which it was fronted is one that is not compatible with the NPI’s quantificational properties
 - the movement operation that the stranded material in the constituent ellipsis analysis in (33) undergoes is definitely FOCUS movement: the stranded material in ellipsis constructions is always focused
 - this is the kind of movement that NPIs demonstrably *can* undergo, as (35b) shows
- the problem with (35a) might very well be fixed by ellipsis of the material following the fronted constituent
 - the problem with (35a) is that, in its position in the left periphery, the NPI *immediately precedes the comment*, which makes it serve as a topic in a TOPIC–COMMENT structure — which NPIs resist because of their quantificational properties
 - but in reduced TC SPCs, the comment-TP undergoes ellipsis in its entirety, and as a result, the stranded material does not immediately precede anything: it is in fact clause final
 - in reduced TC SPCs, moreover, the material escaping TP ellipsis follows a topical *wh*-clause
 - at PF, therefore, the bracketed portion of (36) is not articulated as a TOPIC–COMMENT structure, and as a result, the fronted constituent is not identified as a topic

(36) what *nobody* bought was [_{any} wine_i [_{TP} ~~nobody bought *t*~~]]

- the NPI in (36) is legitimate in this position precisely because of the fact that the clause next to which it lands undergoes ellipsis
- this line of reasoning is in line with Erteschik-Shir’s (2007:214) conclusion that information structure is ‘part of the phonological computation’ — and an analysis of TC SPCs with NPI-values along the lines of (36) could even lend interesting support for Erteschik-Shir’s conclusion
- the previous discussion of (36) has sought to defang one problem with a constituent ellipsis approach to TC SPCs with NPI-values: the information-structural problem
 - there is, of course, a second problem to be addressed as well: the c-command problem — in (36), the NPI is not c-commanded by its licensing negation
 - identifying the material escaping TP ellipsis as a focus is not sufficient to guarantee reconstruction below the negation: while (35b) is grammatical, in root contexts NPIs cannot undergo focus fronting

(37) *under *any* circumstances wouldn’t he do such a thing

- **CONJECTURE:** the NPI in (36) is licensed *indirectly* by the negation in the elliptical clause
 - the negation in the elliptical clause licenses a null negative operator (Op^-) in the specifier of the fronted DP; this negative operator licenses the NPI *any* inside the fronted DP

(38) what *nobody* bought was [[_{DP} Op^- [_{QP} *any* [_{NP} wine]]]_i [_{TP} ~~nobody bought *t*~~]]

- support for this conjecture comes from the fact that the Dutch special polarity item ‘polar-*heel*’ (Den Dikken 2002, 2006) cannot be licensed at all in specificational pseudoclefts, neither as the post-copular constituent nor inside that constituent, not even parasitically, by piggy-backing on a legitimately licensed run-of-the-mill polarity item

- (38) a. ik zou die *hele* vent nooit uitnodigen (Dutch)
 I would that whole bloke never invite
 ‘I would never invite that bloke at all’
 b. ik zou die *hele* vent nooit *ook maar een stuiver* geven
 I would that whole bloke never also but a nickel give
 ‘I would never give as much as a nickel to that bloke at all’
 (39) a. wie ik nooit zou uitnodigen is die (**hele*) vent
 who I never would invite is that whole bloke
 b. wat ik nooit zou doen is die (**hele*) vent uitnodigen
 what I never would do is that whole bloke invite
 c. wat ik nooit zou doen is die (**hele*) vent *ook maar een stuiver* geven
 what I never would do is that whole bloke also but a nickel give

→ on a STRING ELLIPSIS approach along the lines of (34), the examples in (39) could be analysed as in (40), which would leave it a mystery why the sentences in (39) are ungrammatical: polar-*heel* in the postcopular clause would be in exactly the same structural environment as in (38), where it is grammatical

- (40) a. wie ik nooit zou uitnodigen is [~~ik zou die hele vent nooit uitnodigen~~]
 b. wat ik nooit zou doen is [~~ik zou die hele vent nooit uitnodigen~~]
 c. wat ik nooit zou doen is [~~ik zou die hele vent nooit ook maar een stuiver geven~~]

→ the CONSTITUENT ELLIPSIS approach in (38), on the other hand, allows us to understand why (39) fails with *hele* included: Op^{-} does not help polar-*heel* out because the Op^{-} on the edge of the remnant c-commands polar-*heel* and ruins the licensing of this polarity item — though it strictly depends on a negation for its licensing, polar-*heel* does not want to be c-commanded by its licensing negation

- (41) a. ik wil [_{PP} met die *hele* vent]_i [niet [_{VP} *ec*_i praten]]
 I want with that whole bloke not talk
 ‘I don’t want to talk to that bloke at all’
 b. ik wil [niet [_{VP} *ec*_i praten]] [_{PP} met die *hele* vent]_i
 I want not talk with that whole bloke
 c. *ik wil [niet [_{VP} [_{PP} met die *hele* vent] praten]]
 I want not with that whole bloke talk

→ in light of the ungrammaticality of (41c), it is now clear how (42) accounts for the ill-formedness of (39) with *hele* included

- (42) a. *wie ik nooit zou uitnodigen is [[Op^{-} die *hele* vent]_i [~~zou ik t_i nooit uitnodigen~~]]
 b. *wat ik nooit zou doen is [[Op^{-} die *hele* vent uitnodigen]_j [~~zou ik nooit t_j~~]]
 c. *wat ik nooit zou doen is [[Op^{-} die *hele* vent *ook maar een stuiver* geven]_k [~~zou ik nooit t_k~~]]

• returning, in closing, to the examples in (28)–(32), we have seen that the distribution of the ‘P-effect’ in SPCs with NPI-values and multiple *wh*’s confirms DMW’s conclusion that SPCs with NPIs or multiple foci to the right of the copula have full-TP postcopular constituents that are subject to ellipsis — AND (*contra* DMW) that the ellipsis in question is CONSTITUENT ELLIPSIS, with the remnant(s) of ellipsis being removed from the ellipsis site (TP), much as in sluicing constructions