Making accommodations for sprouted stripping

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Abstract: This paper offers an analysis of the observation that stripping in clausal comparatives does not permit sprouted remnants (i.e., remnants not paired with an overt correlate). I argue that this ultimately reflects an inability to recover a suitable antecedent for ellipsis. In brief, it is because implicit arguments fail to offer a suitable antecedent that sprouted stripping requires the accommodation of a Question Under Discussion. The failure to accommodate such an antecedent, specifically in the context of clausal comparatives, is a consequence of the Not-At-Issue status of their content relative to the Question Under Discussion. Accounting for the acceptability of standard stripping in all domains requires that antecedents may also be recovered from previously uttered content in the discourse. This analysis makes the robust prediction that sprouting should generally not be possible in domains whose content is Not-At-Issue with respect to the QUD. The remainder of the paper presents temporal adverbial clauses and *like*-clauses as two additional constructions in which this prediction is borne out.

Keywords: ellipsis, stripping, sprouting, recoverability, accommodation, Question Under Discussion

1 Introduction

The ability to elide some portion of an utterance is constrained by, among other things, the ability to recover the meaning or the content of the ellipsis site. This requirement can be referred to as the Recoverability condition on ellipsis, adapting terminology from Katz & Postal (1964).

Theories regarding the nature of the Recoverability condition have typically been built to find an antecedent for an ellipsis site in one particular domain. The traditional view, which is defended in Hankamer & Sag (1976), and much subsequent work, requires that the antecedent be found within previously spoken content. This provides a way to understand the contrast between the instances of "stripping" in (1) and (2) below, which have been adapted from Hankamer & Sag 1976:409.

(1) *Context : Kayla produces a recorder and plays* Margaritaville.
A: #Nice, and probably on the accordion.

(2) A: Listen, Kayla can play *Margaritaville* on the recorder.
B: Nice, and probably on the accordion.

The intuition is that the contribution made by participant A in (1) is infelicitous. The reason, the idea goes, is that the discourse does not explicitly provide the material that is intended to supply the interpretation for the elided content. On the other hand, the same ellipsis construction as a response from participant B is possible in (2). This is because the initial contribution by participant A provides recoverable antecedent material to fill in the meaning that *probably Kayla can play* Margaritaville *on the accordion.*

The literature on ellipsis has catalogued a significant amount of data that is problematic for this straightforward approach to recoverability, however. There are many cases in which the previously spoken discourse does not contain something with the content or meaning that is intuitively interpreted in the ellipsis site.[1]

One response to this issue is to refine the Identity condition on ellipsis, the requirement that the recovered antecedent and the ellipsis site be sufficiently similar. Relaxing the extent to which an antecedent must match the content or meaning of the elided material can make it possible to accept imperfect antecedents. Another response, which is not mutually exclusive with the previous one, is to propose that the antecedent for an ellipsis site is in fact not recovered from previously spoken content. Ellipsis sites might be resolved via pragmatic strategies that do not make reference

[1]The literature abounds with relevant examples. A few of the more familiar instances and some of the representative studies include sloppy anaphora (Ross 1967, Sag 1976, Williams 1977), split antecedents (Webber 1978), voice mismatches (Hardt 1993, Merchant 2013, Sailor 2014), vehicle change (Fiengo & May 1994), sloppy VP-ellipsis (Hardt 1999, Schwarz 2000), fragment responses (Stainton 2006, Merchant 2004, Progovac 2013, Weir 2014a), and exophoric ellipsis (Miller & Pullum 2013). See also Lipták 2015 and the references provided.

to spoken content and that are independently employed for the resolution of proforms. This is a position that might be most familiar from the research by Hardt (1993, 1999) and Kehler (2000).

Yet another response to such issues seeks a middle ground that allows some degree of flexibility in the recovery of an antecedent for ellipsis. For such approaches, an antecedent might be recoverable from previously spoken content. Alternatively, an antecedent might be found in some content that, although implicit in the discourse, can also be recovered for the satisfaction of ellipsis. Adopting terminology from Fox (1999, 2000), this represents cases of antecedent "accommodation". Of course, accommodation must come with some limits in order to avoid problems of overgeneration. For Fox (2000), accommodation is limited to content that is entailed by an utterance in the discourse along with any of its presuppositions. This idea has been extended or recast in subsequent literature that includes Johnson 2012, van Craenenbroeck 2013, Thoms 2015, Barros & Kotek 2019, and Stockwell 2024.

An influential alternative for accommodation proposes that an antecedent for ellipsis can be recovered from a salient, possibly implicit, question meaning in the discourse. This idea has been applied productively in the domain of sluicing (Ginzburg & Sag 2001, AnderBois 2011, Barros 2014, Griffiths 2019b), fragment answers to questions (Reich 2007, Weir 2014a, Jacobson 2016), and sloppy VP-ellipsis (Kehler 2015). The relevant constraints on this type of accommodation can then be made to follow from coherent discourse relations.

The goal of the present manuscript is to extend a flexible view of recoverability that permits the accommodation of implicit question meanings to examples of stripping like in (3):

(3) a. Kim reads **articles** and probably ~~Kim reads~~ **novels**.
b. Kim reads and probably ~~Kim read~~ **novels**.[2]

In the examples above, the "remnant" of ellipsis *novels* may or may not be paired with an overt "correlate" *articles*. In the absence of an overt correlate, the remnant is said to have "sprouted" from the ellipsis site. I will propose that stripping is permitted on the promise of recovering an antecedent either from the spoken content of an utterance or from a possibly implicit question meaning that can be accommodated in the discourse, which we will model in terms of the Question Under Discussion (QUD; Büring 2003, Roberts 2012). The in-principle flexibility in the recovery of an antecedent for ellipsis, we will see, is an expected property of the focus-based redundancy condition proposed in Rooth 1992a,b.

This picture of recoverability, accommodation, and identity will allow for an account of the contrast between the pair of examples in (3) and the pair of comparative constructions shown below in (4):

[2] I will adopt the convention using ~~strikethrough~~ text to indicate elided content.

(4) a. Kim reads **articles** more carefully than ~~Kim reads~~ **novels**.
b. *Kim reads more carefully than ~~Kim reads~~ **novels**.[3]

Section 2 will review some of the previous literature that converges on the idea that the phrasal comparatives in (4) are targeted by an application of the same stripping operation that generates the examples in (3). Granted that this is the case, it must be explained why sprouting becomes unacceptable in a comparative clause.

I will argue that sprouted stripping represents an instance in which the spoken content of an utterance fails to provide an antecedent for ellipsis. More specifically, implicit arguments do not contribute to a suitable antecedent for licensing ellipsis in the cases above (see also Stockwell 2020, 2024, Overfelt 2024; see Fortin 2007, 2011, Barros 2014, Barros & Kotek 2019 on the contribution of implicit arguments to ellipsis). This means that, while there is spoken material in (3a) and (4a) to provide antecedents for the elided content, the cases of sprouting in (3b) and (4b) must rely on the possibly implicit QUD for the purpose of accommodating and recovering a suitable antecedent.

It is the reliance on the accommodation of a QUD antecedent that will allow us to distinguish the constructions above. I will propose and capitalize on a difference in the At-Issue status of the content contained in each of the above constructions relative to the QUD (Simons et al. 2010, Tonhauser 2012). It is because the content of the comparative clause is Not-At-Issue with respect to the QUD that it will not be possible to recover a QUD as an antecedent for ellipsis.[4] Consequently, in the case of (4b) specifically, there is no suitable antecedent provided by spoken content of the utterance nor is it possible to felicitously accommodate a QUD as an antecedent. Sprouted stripping, therefore, cannot be licensed in a comparative clause.

As noted, immediately below in section 2 we will begin working toward this analysis by providing some of the relevant background on the syntax of stripping, both in coordinate structures and in comparative clauses. Section 3 will introduce in more detail the issue of sprouting as well as the relevant contrast found between pairs of examples like (3) and (4). Given that these constructions are derived via the same mechanisms, we will be led to search for an analysis that is sensitive to some operative difference between coordination structures and comparative structures.

In section 4 I will argue that the operative difference between these two domains is the At-Issueness of their content relative to the QUD. We will appeal to widely-used diagnostics proposed by Tonhauser (2012) to support the claim that the content of a second conjunct is At-Issue with respect to the QUD (Bach 1999, Potts 2005). The same diagnostics indicate that the content of a

[3]The reader might immediately note that the fully pronounced version of example (4b) can be less than acceptable in an out-of-the-blue context. Section 3 offers some discussion of the source of this oddity and presents strategies for improvement, including partitioning the sets of degrees for comparison into the general and the specific: *In general, Kim reads more carefully than she reads novels*.

[4]We will take care to reiterate in what follows that the claim is not that comparative constructions are necessarily QUD Not-At-Issue. It is the content embedded inside the *than*-clause of comparatives that is found to be Not-At-Issue.

comparative clause, on the other hand, is Not-At-Issue with respect to the QUD. Section 5 presents in more detail the analysis that was sketched above. This analysis operates under the hypothesis that sprouting is dependent on the accommodation of a QUD but anaphoricity to the QUD is gated by At-Issueness. These prove to be conflicting requirements on sprouting in comparative clauses, but not on sprouting in coordinate constructions. Section 6 investigates a general prediction of this type of analysis. It should be the case, more generally, that sprouted stripping will be unavailable in domains that are Not-At-Issue with respect to the QUD. We will investigate two domains, namely temporal adverbial clauses and *like*-clauses, where this prediction is borne out. The paper concludes in section 7 by reviewing some of the major results of the investigation and pointing to possible and necessary directions for future research.

2 Background on stripping

Stripping, as it is described by Hankamer & Sag (1976), is a phenomenon whereby some content of a clause is omitted under identity with the content of a preceding clause. The result is typically a single "remnant" constituent that is spared deletion alongside a particle or adverbial element. Examples like those below, with remnants in bold text, exemplify the construction.[5]

(5) a. Jane gave presents to JOHN but she seldom gave presents to GEOFF.
b. Jane gave presents to JOHN but seldom **to GEOFF**. (Lobeck 1995:27, (71a))

(6) a. John read EL QUIJOTE but he did not read HAMLET.
b. John read EL QUIJOTE but not **HAMLET**. (Depiante 2000:104, (4b))

The major analytical puzzle of stripping constructions is how the second conjunct is reduced to just the remnant material. I would direct the reader to the discussions presented in Depiante 2000, Kolokonte 2008, Konietzko 2016 and Johnson 2019 for an overview of the extensive empirical and theoretical landscape of stripping. Much of this literature has operated under the belief that ellipsis, in one of its various conceptions (see Merchant 2019), is responsible for rendering material unspoken.[6] Ellipsis-based approaches provide a straightforward way to make sense of Hankamer & Sag's (1976) observation that stripping is, at some level, anaphoric to parts of the discourse in which appears.

Ellipsis-based approaches raise questions, however, regarding the ability to omit strings that do not obviously correspond to syntactic constituents, something antithetical to some of the earliest

[5]Stripping, like other instances of ellipsis, is closely tied to the focus structure of an utterance (Tancredi 1992, Rooth 1992b). I will use SMALL-CAPS to indicate the placement of the pitch accent associated with focus.

[6]A family of alternative proposals that do not appeal to ellipsis involve what Hudson (1976) refers to as "Conjunct Postposing." Though varied in the precise implementation, the idea is that remnant material is postposed rightward from an initial clause (see also Ross 1967 and Reinhart 1991).

studies of ellipsis (e.g., Sag 1976). As Johnson (2019) observes of example (7) below, the material omitted from the second conjunct would form a discontinuous string of categories:

(7) Smith ate SEAFOOD yesterday and ~~Smith ate~~ BREAD ~~yesterday~~ too.

This apparent non-constituent ellipsis can be understood to arise by way of the Move-and-Delete approach to ellipsis that has been proposed for both sluicing and fragment utterances (Ross 1969, Merchant 2001, 2004, et seq.). This approach to stripping, which finds extensive support from Jayaseelan (1990), Depiante (2000) and Kolokonte (2008), proposes that the example in (7) in fact has the derivation and representation presented in (8).[7]

(8) $[_{CP}$ Smith ate SEAFOOD yesterday $]$ and $[_{CP}$ BREAD$_1$ $\langle_{IP}$ ~~Smith ate t_1 yesterday~~ $\rangle$ too $]$

The remnant constituent *bread* in the derivation above undergoes an instance of $\overline{\text{A}}$-movement to a focus position at the left-periphery of its immediately containing clause. This results in an IP constituent that can be elided to produce the desired surface string.[8]

A commonly encountered claim regarding stripping is that it is only possible in coordination configurations or across utterance boundaries (Hankamer 1979, Lobeck 1995). Indeed, there is a tendency for stripping to be prohibited in subordinate clauses like those below.

(9) *JOHN studied rocks even though not JANE ~~studied rocks~~. (Lobeck 1995:27, (70b))

(10) a. *Jones likes SEAFOOD because ~~she likes~~ BREAD too.
b. *Jones eats SEAFOOD whenever ~~she eats~~ BREAD too.
(adapted from Johnson 2019:562, (4a)–(4b))

One relatively well-known case that has been proposed to counter-exemplify this tendency is re-

[7] I will adopt the convention of enclosing constituents that have been targeted for ellipsis in angled brackets: $\langle_{XP}\ \rangle$.

[8] Ott & Struckmeier (2018) explicate a concern to be had with regard Move-and-Delete approaches to ellipsis. Specifically, the proposed movement of the remnant can be difficult to independently motivate. Consider (i), which is the fully pronounced version of (8). Comparable fronting of *bread* in this case can be perceived as degraded relative to the stripped example above.

(i) ?Smith ate seafood yesterday and bread$_1$ she ate t_1 yesterday too.

This speaks to various alternative approaches to stripping that would treat the remnant as an in-situ constituent; see Chao 1987, McCawley 1991 and Culicover & Jackendoff 2005. In light of such concerns, Johnson (2019) proposes that we expand our conception of what types of movements can be employed to generate remnants. This comes hand-in-hand with proposals that stripping may be applied to coordinated constituents of various sizes (see Lechner 2004, Konietzko 2016, Hirsch 2017, Overfelt 2024). Thus, the movement employed in (i) may not necessarily be the movement employed in the derivation of stripping constructions.

For the purposes of this manuscript, we will treat these issues as orthogonal to those under consideration. It is worth noting, however, that further investigation into the relationship between sprouting and the size of the elided constituent may be called for; see Overfelt 2024.

ferred to with the theory-neutral term Comparative Ellipsis.[9] In pairs of examples like (11) and (12) below, the idea is that the phrasal comparatives in the (b) variants are derivationally related to the clausal comparatives in the respective (a) variants. The omission of clausal material within the *than*-phrase to the exclusion of a single phrasal standard of comparison is treated as the product of an ellipsis operation (e.g., Hankamer 1987, Bresnan 1975, Lechner 2004).[10]

(11) a. Steven meets with ANITA more often [than he meets with FRANK]
b. Steven meets with ANITA more often [than ~~he meets~~ **with FRANK**]

(12) a. CARLA runs faster [than MARK runs]
b. CARLA runs faster [than **MARK** ~~runs~~]

The need to understand what appears to be ellipsis of a non-constituent again motivates a syntactic analysis for phrasal comparatives, like the one in (13), whereby the phrasal standard is $\overline{\text{A}}$-moved out of elided material to become a remnant.[11]

(13) Felix eats SEAFOOD for dinner more often [than BREAD$_1$ ⟨$_{\text{IP}}$ ~~Felix eats t_1 for dinner~~ ⟩]

The type of Move-and-Delete analysis sketched for the constructions above predicts that the remnant will display behaviors that connect it to the elided structure from which it has been extracted. The literature cited above contains numerous arguments to this effect, demonstrating that remnants of stripping behave like a constituent of elided content with respect to selectional requirements, conditions on binding, interpretive effects, and more. For instance, remnants, which are proposed to undergo $\overline{\text{A}}$-movement, are correctly expected to be sensitive to island boundaries

[9] There are several other embedded environments that have been proposed to represent stripping(-like) constructions. These include temporal adverbial clauses (Geis 1970, Larson 1987, Thompson 2005, Overfelt 2021), fragment utterances (Reich 2007, Boone 2014, Weir 2014a), *why*-stripping (Yoshida et al. 2015, Weir 2014b), *like*-clauses (Yoshida 2013), *except*-clauses (Reinhart 1991, Vokstrikova 2021), *if*-clauses (Myers & Yoshida 2019), and *although*-clauses (Park & Kim 2023). While space precludes engaging with all of these constructions on the present occasion, we will return in section 6 to temporal adverbial clauses and *like*-clauses.

[10] Note that there is no intention to claim here that there are no phrasal comparatives that involve direct composition. The supposition of the arguments to follow is that some phrasal comparatives, including the ones presented in the text, arise via comparative ellipsis. This stands in contrast to analyses proposing that there is no ellipsis or reduction mechanism at play. Instead, the phrasal standard of comparison would be treated as composing directly with a prepositional standard marker *than* (e.g., Hankamer 1987, Napoli 1983, Heim 1985, Kennedy 1999). The reader might see Lechner 2019 for further discussion.

[11] Like canonical stripping, the literature on phrasal comparatives has seen discussion regarding the amount of structure that is elided. For example, Merchant (2009) argues that reduced phrasal comparatives in Greek involve clausal ellipsis. Kennedy & Lidz (2001) and Drummond & Shimoyama (2014) argue that comparative ellipsis in English removes an intermediate constituent between the clausal-level and the predicate. Lechner (2004) argues that comparative ellipsis in German reduces both clausal constituents (IPs, AgrSPs, TPs) and sub-clausal constituents (AspPs, VPs). Pancheva (2006) argues that cross-linguistic differences in phrasal comparatives can be understood if phrasal comparatives are generated by eliding either a clausal constituent or the predicate in a small-clause configuration, depending on the language. In the same way as footnote 8, we will treat these issues as ultimately being orthogonal to the claims that are made here, though further investigation is justified.

(e.g., Reinhart 1991, Lobeck 1995, Lechner 2004, Wu 2022; although see Potter 2017 on canonical stripping). The following pair of examples, which are adapted from Merchant (2004) and Lechner (2004) respectively, demonstrate that the remnant of stripping cannot be interpreted as a constituent within a Complex-NP Island.

(14) I met [$_{DP}$ the linguist who studied DUTCH at school] but not

a. [$_{DP}$ the linguist who studied CATALAN at school]$_1$ ⟨ ~~I met t_1~~ ⟩

b. *CATALAN$_1$ ⟨ ~~I met [$_{DP}$ the linguist who studied t_1 at school~~]⟩

(15) I spent time with [$_{DP}$ the person who plays THE CLARINET professionally] but not

a. [$_{DP}$ the person who plays THE LUTE professionally]$_1$ ⟨ ~~I spent time with t_1~~ ⟩

b. *THE LUTE$_1$ ⟨ ~~I spent time with [$_{DP}$ the person who plays t_1 professionally~~]⟩

The (a) variants of the examples above demonstrate the grammaticality of a remnant that contains a Complex-NP Island. The ungrammaticality of the (b) variants, therefore, can be understood from the assertion that the attempted remnants have been extracted from the relative clause.[12] The minimally adapted examples below demonstrate that a phrasal standard of comparison is similarly sensitive to the Complex-NP Constraint.

(16) I visit [$_{DP}$ the linguist who knows DUTCH] more often than

a. [$_{DP}$ the linguist who knows CATALAN]$_1$ ⟨ ~~I visit t_1~~ ⟩

b. *CATALAN$_1$ ⟨ ~~I visit [$_{DP}$ the linguist who knows t_1~~]⟩

(17) I spent time with [$_{DP}$ the person who plays THE CLARINET] more eagerly than

a. [$_{DP}$ the person who plays THE LUTE]$_1$ ⟨ ~~I spent time with t_1~~ ⟩

b. *THE LUTE$_1$ ⟨ ~~I spent time with [$_{DP}$ the person who plays t_1~~]⟩

The sensitivity to island-boundaries is in fact a robust property of stripping. The following examples in (18) and (19) demonstrate that possessors and attributive adjectives cannot serve as the remnant of stripping in coordination structures. Under an analysis in which remnants are generated via movement, these remnants could only be generated in violation of the Left-Branch

[12] There is a grammatical "short-source" interpretation of (14b) and (15b) on a different bracketing (Barros et al. 2014). If coordination is at the level of the embedded predicate, the following interpretations emerge:

(i) I met [$_{DP}$ the linguist who$_2$ [t_2 studied DUTCH at school but not CATALAN$_1$ ⟨ ~~t_2 studied t_1 at school~~ ⟩]]

(ii) I spent time with [$_{DP}$ the person
who$_2$ [t_2 plays THE CLARINET professionally but not THE LUTE$_1$ ⟨ ~~t_2 plays t_1 professionally~~ ⟩]]

These bracketings do not require extraction of the remnant out of the Complex-NP in order to avoid deletion and, therefore, do not induce an island violation. Thus, it is specifically the absence of the interpretations in the text that demonstrate island-sensitivity.

Condition.

(18) Alfred read [$_{DP}$ JULIE's book] but not

a. [$_{DP}$ LEE's book]$_1$ ⟨ ~~Alfred read t_1~~ ⟩

b. *LEE$_1$ ⟨ ~~Alfred read [$_{DP}$ t_1's book~~]⟩

(19) Carol will buy [$_{DP}$ a FAST car] but not

a. [$_{DP}$ a SLOW car]$_1$ ⟨ ~~Carol will buy t_1~~ ⟩

b. *SLOW$_1$ ⟨ ~~Carol will buy [$_{DP}$ a t_1 car~~]⟩

Comparative Ellipsis is similarly sensitive to the Left-Branch Condition, as shown in the minimally different examples immediately below:

(20) Alfred read [$_{DP}$ JULIE's book] more enthusiastically than

a. [$_{DP}$ LEE's book]$_1$ ⟨ ~~Alfred read t_1~~ ⟩

b. *LEE$_1$ ⟨ ~~Alfred read [$_{DP}$ t_1's book~~]⟩

(21) Carol will buy [$_{DP}$ a FAST car] more enthusiastically than

a. [$_{DP}$ a SLOW car]$_1$ ⟨ ~~Carol will buy t_1~~ ⟩

b. *SLOW$_1$ ⟨ ~~Carol will buy [$_{DP}$ a t_1 car~~]⟩

These grammaticality patterns are, once again, expected under the assumption that a remnant undergoes $\overline{\text{A}}$-movement to a position where it escapes the elided content.

In sum, there is evidence that the remnant of stripping configurations is extracted from elided syntactic content. Moreover, there is good reason to suspect that at least some phrasal comparatives are generated via the same mechanism. The need to recover an antecedent for this elided content in both types of constructions will guide our analysis of the observation that stripping is more restricted in certain configurations, which we turn to now.

3 A domain constraint on sprouted stripping

The primary empirical phenomenon of interest in this paper is a difference in the availability for sprouted stripping found in coordination and comparative configurations. Sprouting has most notably been discussed in research by Chung, Ladusaw, & McCloskey (1995, 2011) and Chung (2005). It is a phenomenon most commonly exemplified by pairs of "sluicing" constructions like in (22).

(22) a. Kim read **SOMETHING**, but I forget **WHAT**$_1$ ⟨$_{IP}$ ~~Kim read t_1~~ ⟩

b. Kim read, but I forget **WHAT**$_1$ ⟨$_{IP}$ ~~Kim read t_1~~ ⟩

These examples present the standard analysis of sluicing as an instance ellipsis that targets an IP constituent from which a *wh*-element is extracted. From a descriptive standpoint regarding (22a), the remnant of ellipsis *what* is paired with the "correlate" *something* in the preceding clause. In (22b), the remnant constituent *what* lacks any overt correlate in the preceding clause. It has, therefore, "sprouted" from the ellipsis site.[13]

As has been pointed out previously by Nakao, Yoshida, & Ortega-Santos (2012), stripping configurations similarly allow for sprouted remnants:

(23) a. John served dinner **to HIS SISTER** { but not / and probably }
to HIS FATHER$_1$ ⟨ ~~John served dinner t_1~~ ⟩.

b. John served dinner { but not / and probably }
to HIS FATHER$_1$ ⟨ ~~John served dinner t_1~~ ⟩
(adapted from Nakao et al. 2012:273, (17b))

The following examples serve to demonstrate that the possibility for sprouting is a fairly general property of stripping configurations.

(24) a. Kim reads **ARTICLES** { but not / and possibly } **NOVELS**$_1$ ⟨ ~~Kim reads t_1~~ ⟩
b. Kim reads articles { but not / and possibly } **NOVELS**$_1$ ⟨ ~~Kim reads t_1~~ ⟩

(25) a. Felix eats **CHICKEN** { but not / and possibly } **SEAFOOD**$_1$ ⟨ ~~Felix eats t_1~~ ⟩
b. Felix eats { but not / and possibly } **SEAFOOD**$_1$ ⟨ ~~Felix eats t_1~~ ⟩

(26) a. Laura is able to write **at THE OFFICE** { but not / and probably }
AT HOME$_1$ ⟨ ~~Laura likes to write t_1~~ ⟩
b. Laura is able to write { but not / and probably }
AT HOME ⟨ ~~Laura is able to write t_1~~ ⟩

The remnant of the stripping operation in the (a) variants above is matched by an overt correlate in the first conjunct. Lacking an overt correlate in the (b) variants, the remnant in those cases has sprouted from the ellipsis site. On the basis of these data, we can see that both DPs and PPs with different grammatical roles in different types of coordinations are able to appear as remnants in stripping configurations, with or without a paired correlate.

The empirical puzzle of the manuscript is the relative unacceptability of sprouted stripping in particular embedded environments, including comparative constructions. The examples that follow are adapted from those above. The (a) variants of these examples provide grammatical controls,

[13]The term "sprouting" reflects the theoretical analysis of ellipsis in Chung et al. 1995 as an operation that involves LF-copying. Copying of the antecedent material in (22) would not generate a remnant constituent, thus a remnant sprouts from the ellipsis site.

demonstrating that stripping is possible in these environments, so long as remnants are paired with overt correlates. Once again, this is possible for both DPs and PPs with different grammatical roles. The (b) variants present the experimental conditions. Their ungrammaticality demonstrates that sprouting is severely degraded, if not outright ungrammatical, in phrasal comparatives.

(27) a. John serves dinner **to HIS SISTER**
earlier than **to HIS FATHER**$_1$ ⟨ ~~John serves dinner t_1~~ ⟩

b. *When there are visitors, John serves dinner
earlier than **to HIS FATHER**$_1$ ⟨ ~~John served dinner t_1~~ ⟩

c. When there are visitors, John serves dinner earlier than he serves dinner **to his father**.

(28) a. Kim reads **ARTICLES** more carefully than **NOVELS**$_1$ ⟨ ~~she reads t_1~~ ⟩

b. *If she's reading an article, Kim reads more carefully than **NOVELS**$_1$ ⟨ ~~she reads t_1~~ ⟩

c. If she's reading an article, Kim reads more carefully than she reads **novels**.

(29) a. Felix eats **CHICKEN** faster than **SEAFOOD**$_1$ ⟨ ~~Felix eats t_1~~ ⟩

b. *Generally speaking, Felix eats faster than **SEAFOOD**$_1$ ⟨ ~~Felix eats t_1~~ ⟩

c. Generally speaking, Felix eats faster than he eats **SEAFOOD**.

(30) a. Laura is able to write **at THE OFFICE**
for longer than **at HOME**$_1$ ⟨ ~~Laura is able to write t_1~~ ⟩

b. *Under normal circumstances, Laura is able to write
for longer than **at HOME**$_1$ ⟨ ~~Laura is able to write t_1~~ ⟩

c. Under normal circumstances, Laura is able to write
for longer than she is able to write **at home**.

The analysis to be pursued in the following sections proposes that this failure of sprouting in comparative clauses specifically reflects an inability to recover an antecedent for the elided content. It is important, therefore, to establish that there is nothing in principle that precludes the representations or derivations that underlie the attempted sprouting constructions above. The (c) variants, therefore, are provided to establish the baseline for the experimental (b) variants. They have been designed to facilitate a salient and plausible interpretation for what are, admittedly, atypical sentences.

Ensuring that the non-elided (c) variants of examples (27)–(30) are felicitous can be a tricky business. In an unremarkable example like (31a), which is adapted from above, the contrastive elements in the root and embedded clause straightforwardly establish a pair of distinct sets of degrees for comparisons. Given a fairly standard meaning for the comparative morpheme *-er/more*, this sentence is true if and only if the maximal degree provided by the matrix clause exceeds the

maximal degree provided by the comparative clause ($\lambda P_{\langle d,t\rangle}\lambda Q_{\langle d,t\rangle}$. $\textsc{max}(Q) > \textsc{max}(P)$; Heim 2000).

(31) a. Felix eats CHICKEN faster than he eats SEAFOOD.
$\textsc{max}(\{d : \text{Felix eats chicken } d\text{-fast}\}) > \textsc{max}(\{d' : \text{Felix eats seafood } d'\text{-fast}\})$

b. #Felix eats faster than he eats SEAFOOD.
$\textsc{max}(\{d : \text{Felix eats } d\text{-fast}\}) > \textsc{max}(\{d' : \text{Felix eats seafood } d'\text{-fast}\})$

From a logical standpoint, the example in (31b) is capable of satisfying these truth conditions as well. In an out-of-the-blue context, however, it can be significantly worse than what the assessment as "atypical" might indicate.

The reason, I suggest, is due to a perceived contradiction. The situations described by the comparative clause in (31b), wherein Felix eats seafood, exemplify the proposition that Felix eats by virtue of being special cases of Felix eating (e.g., Kratzer 2023). Additionally, given that the content of the comparative clause is presupposed (see section 5.3), the issue of what Felix eats is taken to be settled: when Felix eats he eats seafood. Taken together, it is natural to infer that the degrees of comparison in the root and embedded clauses are evaluated relative to the same eating situations. That is, those situations in which Felix eats seafood are those relevant situations in which Felix eats. This in turn leads to the additional inference that $\textsc{max}(Q) = \textsc{max}(P)$ should hold, meaning that all relevant eating situations are expected to attain the same maximal degree of speed. However, this directly contradicts the truth conditions of the comparative morpheme, which requires an inequality (see Nussbaum 2017 for related ideas). This gives rise the intuitive sentiment that it is unclear what is being compared in sentences like (31b).

The contrastive elements in the matrix and embedded clauses of (31a), on the other hand, help to ensure that the degrees of comparison provided by each domain are evaluated relative to distinct (sub)situations, namely those of eating chicken and those of eating seafood—this is similarly the case in the (a) variants of (27)–(30). Thus, the equality inference mentioned above does not arise and the perceived contradiction is avoided. Given the goals of present study, the strategy of using contrastive remnants to partition the comparison sets is not available in the (b) variants of (27)–(30). These examples are designed to investigate sprouting, which necessarily precludes a contrastive correlate in the root clause. More generally, the need to satisfy the identity condition on ellipsis precludes contrasting other aspects of the sentence, such as tense and modality, in ways that would achieve the same effect: *Felix can eat faster than he was eating seafood*.

Therefore, the strategy adopted for the experimental items, as well as for (32) below, is to include adverbial clauses that provide topic situations for the root clause which are distinct from the situations described in the embedded clause.

(32) a. { When any kind of poultry is involved / If we're talking about chicken },
Felix eats faster than *(he eats) seafood.

b. { In most situations / When everything is normal },
Felix eats faster than *(he eats) seafood.

In (32a) the adverbials clauses make salient a value for the implicit argument. In (32b), they create a partition between a superset of generic/typical situations and a subset of specific alternative situation. Speaking for myself, it is possible to accommodate these kinds of topic situations without invoking the explicitly with adverbials, meaning that they are optional. This intuition has been shared by informed participants in informal studies of these examples, but not by everyone, including an anonymous reviewer who points out that adverbial support of some kind is necessary to make these examples acceptable. Regardless, the examples above show that instances of sprouted stripping cannot be salvaged even with support from a topic situation introduced by an adverbial.

As a final note on the data, we might observe that, while arguments strongly resist serving as sprouted remnants in comparative clauses, certain adjuncts appear to counter-exemplify the claim that sprouting is never possible in these domains. The example in (33) is a case in point, where the temporal adverb *last year* intuitively survives an application of ellipsis.

(33) ?Felix ate faster than ~~he ate~~ **last year**.

I believe that this argument/adjunct asymmetry reflects the fact that adjuncts, but not arguments, may be base-generated in positions that are outside the elided constituent. As such, they are not genuine remnants and are not subject to the conditions on ellipsis. The potentially variable behavior of different types of adjuncts, such as the temporal adverb in (33) and the locative adverb in (30), may reflect the fact that different types of adjuncts are base-generated at different positions within a clause, some being inside and some outside the constituent(s) targeted by stripping (recall footnotes 8 and 11). Due to these potentially confounding factors, the remainder of the manuscript focuses on data with remnants that are interpreted as grammatical arguments.[14]

In light of the contrasts found in the examples above, the puzzle we are left with is that otherwise attested stripping in comparative clauses becomes ungrammatical when the remnant is sprouted, lacking an overt correlate in the root clause. Whatever the reason, we should also be able to explain why no such restriction is found when stripping applies to the second conjunct of a coordination structure.

[14]It is also possible that example (33) presents a putative counter-example as an instance of a true phrasal comparative that is generated via direct composition of *last year* with the standard marker. In this scenario (33) would not be an instance of sprouting on account of not involving stripping. While I cannot conclusively rule out this possibility, it would remain unexplained why a similar strategy cannot be employed to salvage the other examples in the text.

4 QUD At-Issueness

One approach to the puzzle at hand could simply assert the existence of a rule that blocks sprouting specifically in comparative clauses. Indeed, previous literature has uncovered positional constraints on sprouting (Chung et al. 2011, Chung 2013, Larson 2014).[15] Looking ahead to the discussion in section 6, such a rule might generally ban sprouting from non-complement embedded clauses. It would remain to be explained, however, why such a rule exists. The analysis to be presented, on the other hand, attempts to derive these observations from more general principles required for the licensing of ellipsis, namely recoverability and accommodation, and to ground the analysis in independently observable differences between these domains.[16]

The idea to come is that suitable antecedents for sprouting constructions are necessarily absent from the spoken content of the discourse and must be accommodated. Sprouting, therefore, is ungrammatical in precisely those domains that cannot be anaphoric to an accommodated antecedent for ellipsis. This idea is executed within a framework developed in Büring 2003 and especially Roberts 2012, where discourses are structured on the basis of questions to be resolved and utterances intended to resolve them. The question that interlocutors are actively attempting to resolve is referred to as the Question Under Discussion (QUD). Following the research cited, the QUD is to be understood as a salient linguistic entity in the discourse that has, at minimum, the logico-semantic content of a question.

The real force of the analysis comes from the concept of At-Issueness, which Simons et al. (2010) and Tonhauser (2012) formulate relative to the QUD. This notion provides a way of understanding the intuition that not all utterances, or parts of utterances, are able to felicitously contribute

[15] Previous research reported by Schwarz (1999) and Winkler (2005) has also identified restrictions on sprouting in Gapping constructions, which are occasionally claimed to be related to Stripping if not the same mechanism (see Hankamer 1979, Winkler 2005, and Johnson 2019). Winkler (2005) offers a account of those facts that blames the lack of sprouting on the first conjunct and the gapped conjunct failing to answer to same salient discourse question. While the analysis to come also relies on accommodated question meanings in the discourse, it will not be required that both conjuncts address the same question.

[16] A particularly salient dimension on which coordinations and comparatives differ is the additional degree operator-variable relationship commonly believed to be found in clausal comparatives (Chomsky 1977; see Kennedy 2005 and Lechner & Corver 2017 for discussion). Assuming that no such isomorphic dependency exists in the second conjunct of canonical stripping configurations, one might assert that the observed ungrammaticality reflects a violation of the extensively investigated requirement for parallel binding and scopal dependencies in the ellipsis site and its antecedent, namely Scope Parallelism (Romero 1998, Fox 2000, et seq.).

There is, however, a rich literature that treats comparatives—and the degree phrase in particular—as quantificational expressions that undergo Quantifier Raising (e.g., Guéron & May 1984, Heim 2000, Lechner 2004, Bhatt & Pancheva 2004). This means that, on at least some analyses, the Degree Phrase containing the comparative morpheme moves to its scope-taking position, generating a degree operator-variable chain in the root clause as well. It is not clear, therefore, that the lack of sprouting in comparatives can be blamed on non-parallel scopal relations. It is also not clear that we should want to place the blame here; if the degree operator disrupts ellipsis by violating Scope Parallelism in the case of a sprouted remnant, it would surely do so in the case of an overt correlate as well. This approaches, therefore, does not offer an account of the full paradigm.

to the task of resolving the QUD. We will adopt the concise definition of QUD At-Issueness that is presented by Koev (2018:3, (2)):

(34) *QUD At-Issueness*
A proposition p is At-Issue with respect to the QUD *iff*
i. p is relevant to the QUD and
ii. p is appropriately conventionally marked relative to the QUD.

It is with respect to this concept of QUD At-Issueness that we will distinguish coordination structures from comparative structures. It will be found that the content of second conjuncts, but not comparative clauses, can be At-Issue with respect to the QUD. This will ultimately determine whether a QUD can be accommodated as an antecedent for the purpose of licensing sprouted stripping in that domain.

Later sections will introduce the theoretical machinery before demonstrating how we derive the paradigm of stripping in coordinations and comparatives, both with and without overt correlates. We will then extend this analysis to two other domains that similarly disallow sprouted stripping and are amenable to the same treatment. Toward these ends, it will be useful to first introduce each clause in the definition of QUD At-Issueness in turn.

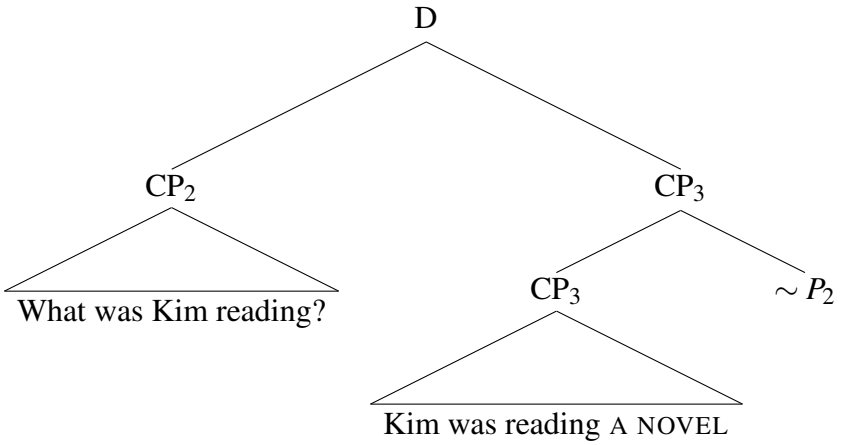
4.1 Relevance to the QUD

Concerning the first clause of (34), a common way of talking about the relevance of a proposition p to the QUD is whether or not p shifts the probabilistic weights among the possible answers to the question being addressed (Carnap 1950, Büring 2003, Koev 2018). While there are various ways in which this can be achieved, one way to do this, which will be of particular importance here, is through "congruent answers." These are those answers to the question that, following Rooth (1985, 1992b) and Roberts (2012), have the same focal structure as the question.

By way of demonstration, consider the congruent question-answer pair presented in (35a). This exchange is illustrated by the discourse representation tree in (35b). There is an explicitly proffered question, which is represented as CP_2 and establishes the QUD. The constituent CP_3 represents a congruent answer to this question.

(35) a. Q: What was Kim reading?
A: Kim was reading A NOVEL.

b.



Congruence based on the focal structure of an utterance is couched within the framework of Alternative Semantics (Rooth 1985, 1992b). Within this framework expressions have both an ordinary semantic value $[\![\cdot]\!]^{o}$ and a focus semantic value $[\![\cdot]\!]^{f}$. The focus semantic value of the answer offered with CP_3 is derived by replacing the focus-marked instance of *a novel* with its contextually-restricted alternatives and computing the resulting meanings in a pointwise fashion. This delivers the set of alternative propositions shown in (36b), which can be equivalently represented with the set abstraction notation in (36c).[17]

(36) a. $[\![\text{CP}_3]\!]^{f} = [\![[\text{ Kim was reading A NOVEL }]]\!]^{f}$

b. $[\![\text{CP}_3]\!]^{f} = \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{that Kim was reading an article, that Kim was reading a novel} \\ \text{that Kim was reading a magazine, that Kim was reading a comic, } \ldots \end{array} \right\}$

c. $[\![\text{CP}_3]\!]^{f} = \{\, p : p = \text{that Kim was reading } x \mid x \in \mathit{Alt}(\text{a novel}) \,\}$

The interpretation of focus-marking is carried out by the focus interpretation operator, $\sim$ ("squiggle"), which triggers the presupposition that some element can be recovered from the discourse that meets one of the two conditions of the Focus Interpretation Principle:

(37) *Focus Interpretation Principle* (adapted from Rooth 1992a:86, (27))
In interpreting focus at the level of a phrase XP:
i.) there must be some Γ such that $[\![\Gamma]\!]^{o} \subseteq [\![\text{XP}]\!]^{f}$ or
ii.) there must be some γ such that $[\![\gamma]\!]^{o} \in [\![\text{XP}]\!]^{f}$

Stated differently, it must possible to recover some element from this discourse whose ordinary semantic value is either (i) a set of elements that is a subset of the focus semantic value of the

[17] The notation adopted in the text for expository purposes obscures the fact that propositions would be more precisely conceived of as sets of functions from worlds/situations to truth values.

constituent XP or (ii) a member of the focus semantic value of XP.[18]

Recovery of a discourse element for evaluation relative to (37) is achieved via indexing with a variable P_n, which is introduced as an argument of $\sim$. Following Hamblin (1973), Rooth (1992a), Beck (2006) and Kotek (2019), the ordinary semantic value of the question CP_2 in (35) can be modeled as a set of propositions derived by replacing the *wh*-constituent with contextually salient values. The result is set of possible answers that can again be equivalently represented with the set abstraction notation in (38c).

(38) a. $[\![\text{CP}_2]\!]^{\text{o}} = [\![[\text{WHAT was Kim reading}]]\!]^{\text{o}}$

b. $[\![\text{CP}_2]\!]^{\text{o}} = \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{that Kim was reading an article, that Kim was reading a novel} \\ \text{that Kim was reading a magazine, that Kim was reading a comic, } \ldots \end{array} \right\}$

c. $[\![\text{CP}_2]\!]^{\text{o}} = \{ p : p = \text{that Kim was reading } x \mid x \in Alt(\text{what}) \}$

As shown in (39), recovery of this constituent is validated by satisfaction of clause (i) of the Focus Interpretation Principle.

(39) a. $[\![\text{CP}_2]\!]^{\text{o}} = \{ p : p = \text{that Kim was reading } x \mid x \in Alt(\text{what}) \}$

b. $[\![\text{CP}_3]\!]^{\text{f}} = \{ p : p = \text{that Kim was reading } x \mid x \in Alt(\text{an article}) \}$

c. $[\![\text{CP}_2]\!]^{\text{o}} \subseteq [\![\text{CP}_3]\!]^{\text{f}}$

The constituent CP_2 in (35), therefore, is congruent to the QUD in that same example. As such, it is relevant to the QUD as a possible answer.

4.2 Conventional marking relative to the QUD

The second clause of the definition for QUD At-Issueness in (34) says, in the words of Koev (2018), that p must be "appropriately packaged" in a linguistic form that both sufficiently signals and permits relevance to the QUD. It is on this dimension that I propose we find the operative difference between the content of second conjuncts and the content of the *than*-clause of a comparative.

The claim to be had in the forthcoming discussion is specifically that the propositional content contained within a comparative *than*-clause is Not-At-Issue with respect to the QUD. To illustrate, consider the comparative construction below:

(40) Kim was working on her article
more carefully than [she was reading the novel *d-carefully*]

[18] Rooth (1992a) also adds to the presupposed conditions on interpreting focus that there are requirements for distinctness between the recovered discourse element and the constituent XP containing focus marking. While I will abstract away from this issue here, the reader might consult Repp (2016) and Stockwell (2020) for recent discussions of the relevance of such a requirement.

The comparative clause has as part of its content a proposition expressing that Kim was reading the novel with a degree d of carefulness, which, of course, entails the proposition that Kim was reading the novel. It is this content specifically that we will see is Not-At-Issue with respect to the QUD.

Again, this distinguishes the content of a comparative clause from the content of a second conjunct in examples like (41):

(41) a. Kim wasn't reading the article but [she was reading the novel]
b. Sam made breakfast and [he cleaned the counter]

We will see that there is evidence to suggest that the content of a second conjunct is packaged in such a way that it can be construed as an intent to address the QUD. This is similar to the discussions presented by Bach (1999) and Potts (2005), who argue that *but* conjoins two separate at-issue propositions.

Evidence that speaks to this distinction can be found in a set of diagnostic tests proposed and consolidated by Tonhauser (2012). A particularly relevant test for the purposes of the analysis is based on the hypothesis that some propositional content can solely serve as an answer to the QUD only if it is At-Issue content. The example below presents an attempt to answer the QUD solely with the content of a comparative clause.

(42) A: What was Kim reading (carefully)?
B: #Kim was working on her article more carefully than she was reading THE NOVEL.

The content of the comparative clause in the response from participant B in (42), which has the focus semantic value in (43), could serve as a congruent answer to the QUD posed by participant A.

(43) $\{\ p : p = \text{that Kim was reading } x \text{ } d\text{-carefully} \mid x \in Alt(\text{the novel})\ \}$

This content, therefore, is relevant to the QUD in the way defined above in section 4.1. Nonetheless, it cannot felicitously be construed as the answer to participant A's question. On the basis of this diagnostic, the content of a comparative clause is Not-At-Issue with respect to the QUD.

It is worth reiterating that the claim here is not that the comparative construction as a whole cannot be construed as QUD-At-Issue content. After all, a comparative construction naturally serves as the answer to a question like the following:

(44) a. How carefully was Kim reading the article?
b. Kim was reading the article more carefully than she was reading the novel.

Thus, a comparative construction in its entirety can be construed as QUD At-Issue content. The

claim to be had here, again, is that it is the propositional content of the comparative *than*-clause that is Not-At-Issue with respect to the QUD.

This stands in contrast to a congruent answer that is packaged within a second conjunct, as shown in the example below:

(45) A: What was Kim reading?
B: Kim is working on her article but she was reading A NOVEL.

(46) A: What did Sam clean?
B: Sam made breakfast and he cleaned THE COUNTER.

The questions from participant A here will find congruent answers in the shape of responses whose focus-semantic value is one of the following sets:

(47) $\{\ p : p = \text{that Kim was reading } x \mid x \in Alt(\text{a novel})\ \}$

(48) $\{\ p : p = \text{that Sam cleaned } x \mid x \in Alt(\text{the counter})\ \}$

The content of the second conjuncts of (45) and (46) are of precisely this form, making them the sole content that is relevant to their respective QUDs. With the understanding that the responses from participant B also serve to signal the pursuit of more complex discourse strategies than what is explicitly presented, this content felicitously provides the answer to participant A's questions. In line with previous research, then, the content of a second conjunct is At-Issue with respect to the QUD.

In sum, the diagnostics above support the claim that the content of second conjuncts and the content of comparatives have a different status in the discourse. With respect to the concept of QUD At-Issueness, content that is intended to be relevant to the QUD can be packaged inside of a second conjunct, but not inside the *than*-clause of a comparative construction. In conjunction with the data examined in section 3, we can appreciate that this distinction coincides with the possibility for sprouted stripping. Specifically, sprouted stripping is not possible in QUD Not-At-Issue content.

5 Sprouted stripping is gated by QUD At-Issueness

In light of the correlation identified in the preceding section, the following discussion aims to make the possibility for sprouting a function of the ability to accommodate and recover a QUD antecedent for ellipsis. This will ultimately be determined by the At-Issue status of content targeted by ellipsis. We will begin by presenting the basic properties of the analysis involved in licensing stripping with overt correlates. The remainder of the section will present a system for antecedent

accommodation that accounts for the restricted distribution of sprouted remnants.

5.1 Recovering an overt antecedent for stripping

Along with a Recoverability condition, ellipsis is also subject to a condition requiring that there be some level of identity with an antecedent. For Rooth (1992a), the condition for semantic redundancy built into the Focus Interpretation Principle is argued to be capable (at least in part) of enforcing the relevant kind of identity that is required in the licensing of ellipsis. We will adopt the Ellipsis Redundancy Condition that is provided below and developed by both Takahashi & Fox (2005), Griffiths (2019a) and Stockwell (2020).[19]

(49) *Ellipsis Redundancy Condition*
Ellipsis of XP is permitted only if:
i. there is a recoverable antecedent constituent (AC),
ii. there is a Parallelism Domain (PD) that contains XP, and
iii. either $[\![\text{ AC }]\!]^{o} \subseteq [\![\text{ PD }]\!]^{f}$ or $[\![\text{ AC }]\!]^{o} \in [\![\text{ PD }]\!]^{f}$.

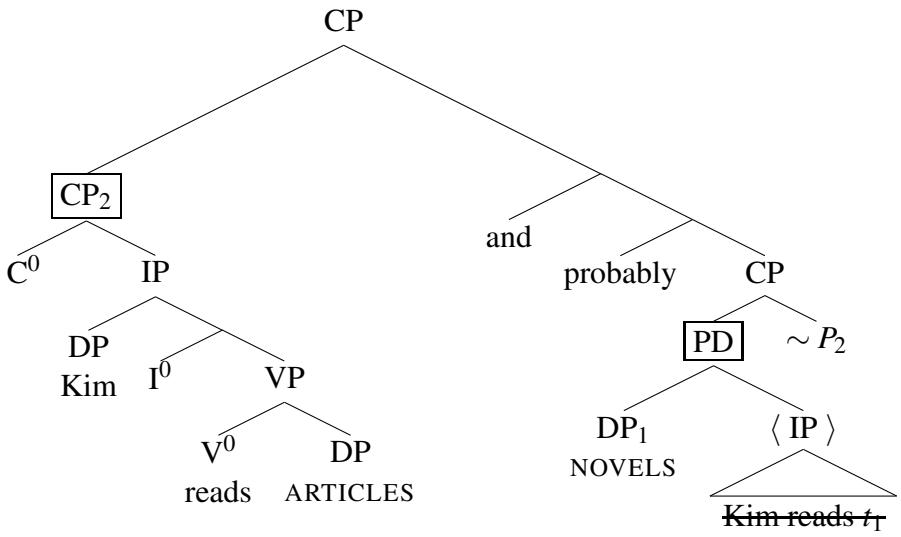
Stated plainly, this condition requires that an elided constituent be contained within some constituent referred to as a Parallelism Domain. It is this constituent for which an antecedent must be recovered from the discourse in order to satisfy the principles of focus interpretation. This semantic redundancy, established as part of interpreting focus-marked elements, licenses reduction of the redundant material by way of ellipsis.

Example (50) below presents the representation for stripping with an overt correlate in a coordination structure. Informed by the results of section 2, the remnant constituent *novels* is $\overline{\text{A}}$-moved to a position in the left periphery of its containing clause where it is spared an application of ellipsis targeting the IP.

[19]For Rooth (1992a), the semantic redundancy condition in (49) is paired with an independent syntactic redundancy condition that enforces a degree of structural isomorphism between an ellipsis site and its antecedent. The claims made in this paper do not obviously depend on a particular version of such a constraint. However, insofar as the QUD is accepted as a possible antecedent for ellipsis, it becomes less clear what it would mean to enforce structural identity between the ellipsis site and the QUD. This is where future research may attempt to capitalize on the explanatory power that other research have found in treating the QUD as a set of structured meanings (Weir 2018, Griffiths 2019b).

(50) a. Kim reads ARTICLES and probably NOVELS.

b.



As shown in (51i), the ordinary semantic value of CP_2, the constituent recovered as the antecedent, is a proposition *that Kim reads articles*. The focus semantic value of the Parallelism Domain is calculated by replacing the focus-marked remnant *novels* with its salient alternatives. This yields a set of propositions that have the form in (51ii).

(51) i. $[\![\text{CP}_2]\!]^{\text{o}} =$ that Kim reads articles

ii. $[\![\text{PD}]\!]^{\text{f}} = \{ p : p =$ that Kim reads $x \mid x \in Alt(\text{novels}) \}$

iii. $[\![\text{CP}_2]\!]^{\text{o}} \in [\![\text{PD}]\!]^{\text{f}}$, ellipsis is permitted

Because the ordinary semantic value of CP_2 is a member of the focus semantic value of the PD, ellipsis of the IP contained inside the PD is permitted.[20]

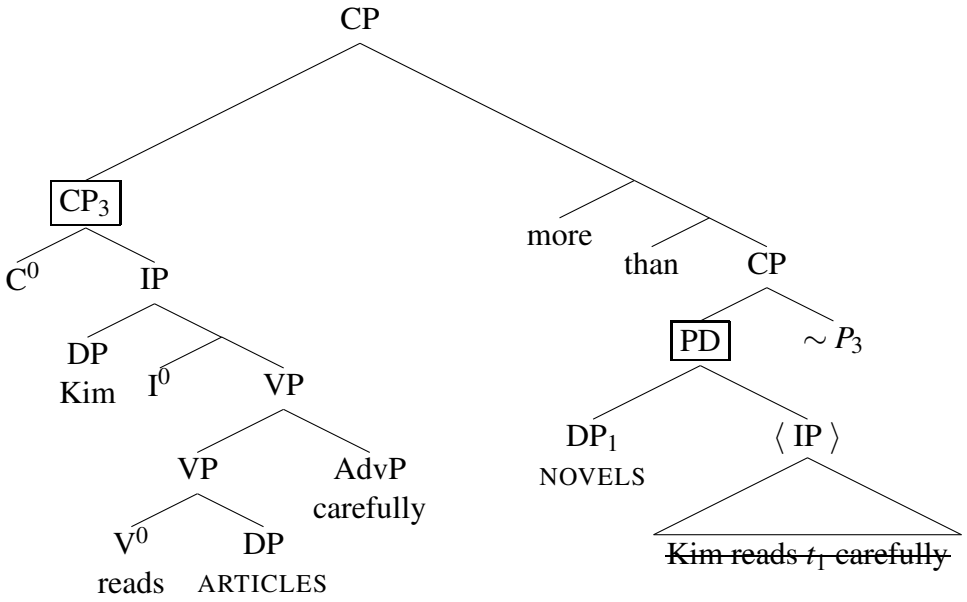
This in fact mirrors precisely the treatment for stripping with an overt correlate in reduced clausal comparatives that is offered in Rooth 1992b:sec.8. For the purpose of illustration, let us assume the possibly naïve representation show in (52).[21]

[20]The presence of focus in the initial conjunct means that focus interpretation will take place there as well. As Rooth (1992b) notes, this is part of the idea that the two constituents are being placed in opposition, or in contrast. As has been noted previously, this is thought to be a crucial part of both interpreting focus and licensing ellipsis. I believe that it is possible to abstract away from this issue for the purpose of the present manuscript. However, the reader should see Griffiths (2019a) and Stockwell (2020) for extended discussion of the relevance that such a requirement has specifically for ellipsis licensing.

[21]See Bhatt & Pancheva (2004) and Lechner & Corver (2017) on the constituency of comparative constructions. The representation in (52) also abstracts away from the issues associated with binding/rebinding introduced by the moved degree operators in the root and comparative clauses. Doing so allows for a cleaner presentation of the analysis without necessarily affecting the claims being made. See footnote 16.

(52) a. Kim reads ARTICLES more carefully than NOVELS.

b.



In the case at hand, the ordinary semantic value of the antecedent CP_3 is the proposition in (53i) below. The focus semantic value of the PD is the set of propositions in (53ii).

(53) i. $[\![\text{CP}_3]\!]^{\text{o}} =$ that Kim reads articles d-carefully
ii. $[\![\text{PD}]\!]^{\text{f}} = \{ p : p =$ that Kim reads x d-carefully $\mid x \in Alt(\text{novels}) \}$
iii. $[\![\text{CP}_3]\!]^{\text{o}} \in [\![\text{PD}]\!]^{\text{f}}$, ellipsis is permitted

Once again, the ordinary semantic value of CP_3 is a member of the set denoted by the focus semantic value of the PD, redundancy is established, and ellipsis within the comparative clause is licensed.

5.2 Accommodating QUD antecedents for sprouting in coordinations

With the basic technology in place and having accounted for the instances of stripping with an overt correlate, we turn to the issue of sprouting in examples like (54):

(54) Kim reads and probably NOVELS.

In the analysis to come, I will propose, following other researchers, that sprouting requires accommodation of an antecedent. This will be argued to be a necessary consequence of the first conjunct *Kim reads* in (54) not providing a suitable antecedent for licensing ellipsis in the second conjunct.

Example (55) presents an abbreviated representation for stripping in a coordination configuration that is based on the structure presented in (50). Note, however, that as an instance of stripping, there is no overt correlate in the root clause. I propose that this representation, in which the an-

tecedent for the elided material is recovered from the content of the first conjunct, is not a possible representation for this string.

(55) *$[_{CP}$ Kim reads $]_4$ and probably $[[_{PD}$ NOVELS$_1$ ~~Kim reads t_1~~ $] \sim P_4$]

i. $[\![\text{CP}_4]\!]^o =$ that Kim reads

ii. $[\![\text{PD}]\!]^f = \{ p : p =$ that Kim reads $x \mid x \in Alt(\text{novels}) \}$

iii. $[\![\text{CP}_4]\!]^o \notin [\![\text{PD}]\!]^f$, ellipsis is not permitted.

The issue with this representation, demonstrated by the calculation of ellipsis redundancy, is that the spoken content in the first conjunct of (55) fails to provide a suitable antecedent for the ellipsis site. The ordinary semantic value of the first conjunct, I argue, can be neither a member nor a subset of the PD.

By hypothesis, the failure to license ellipsis in this way will attain regardless of one's assumptions regarding the syntactico-semantic realization of implicit arguments (see Martí 2006, Landau 2010, Bhatt & Pancheva 2017; on implicit arguments specifically in the context of ellipsis, see Fortin 2007, Barros 2014, Barros & Kotek 2019). If the implicit argument in the first conjunct of (55) contributed to the antecedent for stripping, as either a part of the overt syntax or the logico-semantic formula, the same would presumably be true for those cases of sprouted stripping in comparatives, contrary to fact. Therefore, assuming that an implicit argument plays a role in establishing redundancy in (55) does not obviously lead to an account of the full paradigm at hand.

In addition to this consideration, there are other instances identified in the literature where implicit arguments apparently do not contribute to an appropriate antecedent for ellipsis. For example, Overfelt (2024) argues that VP-ellipsis does not permit sprouted remnants, as demonstrated in examples like (56), which are adapted from Schuyler 2001.

(56) a. PAM will read **THE ARTICLE** and **THE BOOK**$_1$, SUE will $\langle_{VP}$ ~~read t_1~~ $\rangle$

b. *PAM will read and **THE BOOK**$_1$, SUE will $\langle_{VP}$ ~~read t_1~~ $\rangle$

Stockwell (2020, 2024) similarly concludes from examples like (57), which come from Hardt 1993, that implicit agents do not contribute to appropriate antecedents for ellipsis.

(57) a. ?The information was released by **SOMEONE** but **GORBACHEV** didn't $\langle_{VP}$ ~~release the information~~ $\rangle$

b. *The information was released but **GORBACHEV** didn't $\langle_{VP}$ ~~release the information~~ $\rangle$

For both of these authors, the relevant contrast arises, at least in part, from the inability of an implicit argument to either be or provide a suitable alternative to the focused remnant.

This is an interpretation of the ellipsis data that is consistent with independent observations about implicit arguments outside the domain of ellipsis. The calculation of scalar implicatures, for

instance, is commonly thought to involve the comparison of alternatives that are invoked by scalar expressions, including the quantifier *some* (see Horn 1989, Katzir 2008). Assertion of the utterance in (58a) validates a line of reasoning that licenses the inference of the negation of stronger, more informative alternatives, including that William didn't clean everything (Grice 1989, et seq.). The absence of any such implicature from (58b) suggests that existential implicit arguments do not invoke alternatives (see Thoms 2015 for the same observation).

(58) a. William cleaned **something**.
Scalar Implicature : William didn't clean everything.
b. William cleaned.
No Scalar Implicature

A similar point can be made with reference to additive *too*. As a focus sensitive particle, *too* is commonly claimed to introduce a presupposition that there exists a salient alternative to a focus-marked element in its scope (see Ahn 2015, Szabolsci 2017). This presupposition is satisfied with *articles* in (59a). However, the implicit argument in (59b) fails to provide a distinct salient alternative to the remnant, leaving the presupposition of *too* unsatisfied.

(59) a. Kim reads **ARTICLES** and she reads **NOVELS** too.
Satisfied Presupposition : Kim reads something that is not a novel.
b. #Kim reads and she reads **NOVELS** too.
Unsatisfied Presupposition : Kim reads something that is not a novel.

What makes sprouting possible in (55), therefore, is not recovery of the first conjunct as the antecedent for ellipsis. I propose that the possibility for ellipsis instead reflects the ability to recover a QUD from the discourse in the way illustrated in section 4.1. In the example examined there, the QUD was proffered explicitly in the discourse. However, it is commonly recognized that QUDs may be raised and addressed all while remaining implicit in the discourse (Carlson 1983, Cooper et al. 2000). Indeed, for Roberts (2012), this is estimated to be the more common situation.

Consider the exchange presented in (60), which is modeled on examples found in Cooper et al. 2000.

(60) A: What does Kim do?
B: She reads.
$\rightsquigarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \underline{\text{What does Kim read?}}\text{, When does Kim read?,} \\ \text{Where does Kim read?, With whom does Kim read?} \\ \text{How long does Kim read?, } \ldots \end{array} \right\}$
And before you ask, she reads NOVELS.

Participant A explicitly proffers a QUD for which participant B provides a congruent answer: *she reads*. Participant B's utterance also seems to conversationally implicate a family of potential follow-up questions (see also Büring 2003, AnderBois 2011). Given that Kim reads, it is possible to pursue further lines of inquiry with regard to the details of Kim's reading, including the what, the when, the where of it, and more. The idea that such questions have been made salient in the discourse and are available to serve as the QUD is made clear by participant B's continuation. Participant B is, in fact, able to answer any of a number of salient questions without having them proffered explicitly.

(61) B: . . . And before you ask, she reads { novels / during lunch / at the library / with Marcus / for hours / . . . }

Given the variety of responses possible for participant B, determining which of these possible follow-up questions serves as the subsequent QUD requires accommodation on the part of other participants. As Büring (2003) and Roberts (2012) point out, it is possible to accommodate an implicit QUD on the basis of both the content and the focal structure of an utterance. Faced with the utterance *she reads* NOVELS in (60), participant A will determine that this could only be a congruent answer for the discourse-salient question *What does Kim read?*. Participant A is therefore required to accommodate this question meaning as the QUD, and interpret participant B's utterance as anaphoric to it.

It is the same principle of accommodation that I am proposing guides the resolution of sprouted stripping. At least in the case of stripping, sprouting requires the accommodation of a QUD to serve as the antecedent for licensing ellipsis. This QUD is drawn from a set of questions that are conversationally implicated by the material in the first conjunct and is "selected" on the basis of the sprouted remnant. As such, the analysis is reminiscent of the treatment for sprouting in the context of sluicing by AnderBois (2011, 2014) and fragment answers by Weir (2014a). These researchers similarly propose that ellipsis is licensed by the accommodation of a QUD (or inquisitive content) in the context of a sprouted remnant.

Example (62) illustrates the proposal with an abbreviated version of the representation and derivation for sprouted stripping in a coordination structure:

(62) Kim reads and probably $[[_{\text{PD}}\ \text{NOVELS}_1\ \sout{\text{Kim reads } t_1}\ ] \sim P_5\ ]$

i. $[\ \text{Kim reads}\ ] \rightsquigarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{c} [_{\text{QUD}}\ \underline{\text{What does Kim read?}}\ ]_5, \text{When does Kim read?}, \\ \text{Where does Kim read, With whom does Kim read?} \\ \text{How long does Kim read?, } \ldots \end{array} \right\}$

$[\![\ \text{QUD}_5\ ]\!]^{\text{o}} = \{\ p : p = \text{that Kim reads } x \mid x \in Alt(\text{what})\ \}$

ii. $[\![\ \text{PD}\ ]\!]^{\text{f}} = \{\ p : p = \text{that Kim reads } x \mid x \in Alt(\text{novels})\ \}$

iii. $[\![\ \text{QUD}_5\ ]\!]^{\text{o}} \subseteq [\![\ \text{PD}\ ]\!]^{\text{f}}$, ellipsis is permitted.

In the same way as above, the assertion that *Kim reads* evokes a family of follow up questions that can be pursued as the subsequent QUD. The content of the second conjunct, containing the focus marked remnant *novels*, can be interpreted as part of a congruent answer to the question *What does Kim read?*. This congruence is validated by the focus-interpretation operator given the anaphoric link this question meaning has with P_5. At the same time, the relevant redundancy relation is established and ellipsis within the second conjunct is permitted, as desired.

This analysis also comes with the desirable property, mentioned previously, that the remnant of sprouting can be a DP or a PP and have various different grammatical roles as part of answering a variety of potential implicit follow-up questions:

(63) Kim reads and probably $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{novels} \\ \text{during lunch} \\ \text{at the library} \\ \text{with Marcus} \\ \text{for hours} \\ \ldots \end{array} \right\}$

For any of the possible QUDs that are implicated by *Kim read*, they can be accommodated given an appropriate remnant. In all such cases, the accommodated QUD serves as the antecedent for stripping.

Cases of negative stripping with sprouted remnants will work similarly, but will require that we allow for a slightly more sophisticated accommodation process.[22]

(64) Kim reads but NOT NOVELS $\sout{\text{Kim reads } t_1}$

Notably, the content that is interpreted in the second conjunct, *that Kim doesn't read novels*, does not represent a congruent answer to any of those potential follow up question that are implicated by *Kim reads*, most notably including the question *What does Kim read?*. However, it is possible to show with the dialogue in (65) that this information is nonetheless an appropriate answer for

[22] In fact, it is likely that more sophisticated accommodation processes of the kind presented here are employed for all instances of negative stripping as well as stripping with modal adverbials.

this exact question:

(65) A: What does Kim read?
B: Well, she DOESN'T read NOVELS.

To understand both how this information serves as a appropriate answer to this question and how its reduction is licensed in (64), we can think of participant B's contribution in this scenario as a signal that they are offering a partial answer to the question from participant A by addressing one of a number of implicit questions that are entailed by A's original QUD (Roberts 2012). Upon asking *What Kim was reading?*, participant A can be understood as simultaneously pursuing the answers to a series of polar questions in (66) that can be derived by replacing the *wh*-constituent with its possible values (e.g., Biezma 2011).

(66) [What does Kim read?] $\rightsquigarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{Does Kim read articles? ,} \\ \text{Does Kim read a novels?,} \\ \text{Does Kim read magazines?,} \\ \text{Does Kim read comics?, } \ldots \end{array} \right\}$

By again allowing the content and the focal structure of the stripped second conjunct, shown now in (67), to guide the accommodation of a QUD, the focus-marked polarity element *not* will serve as a signal of the intent to address one the entailed polar sub-questions of participant A's original inquiry. The focus-marked remnant *novels* requires us to specifically recover the question *Does Kim read articles?* and promote it to the QUD. This question denotes the set of meanings shown in (67i), where POL ranges over the two values for sentential polarity. The focus semantic value of the content of the second conjunct, wherein the polarity element *not* and the remnant both carry focus, is the set of propositions in (67ii).

(67) Kim reads but $[[_{\text{PD}}$ NOT $[\text{NOVELS}]_1$ ~~Kim reads t_1~~ $] \sim P_6]$

i. [Kim reads] $\rightsquigarrow$ What does Kim read? $\rightsquigarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{c} [_{\text{QUD}} \underline{\text{Does Kim read articles?}}]_6, \\ \text{Does Kim read novels?,} \\ \text{Does Kim read magazines?,} \\ \text{Does Kim read comics?, } \ldots \end{array} \right\}$

$[\![\text{QUD}_6]\!]^{\text{o}} = \{ p : p = \text{that Kim POL reads novels} \mid \text{POL} \in \{+,-\} \}$

ii. $[\![\text{PD}]\!]^{\text{f}} = \{ p : p = \text{that Kim POL reads } x \mid \text{POL} \in \{+,-\},\ x \in Alt(\text{novels}) \}$

iii. $[\![\text{QUD}_6]\!]^{\text{o}} \subseteq [\![\text{PD}]\!]^{\text{f}}$, ellipsis is permitted.

We can see in (67iii) that the set denoted by the implicit, accommodated QUD is a subset of the focus-semantic value of the PD. The content of the second conjunct of (67), *that Kim doesn't read novels*, is therefore expected to serve as a congruent answer to the accommodated QUD, both

in (67) and (65). Just as importantly, this content is sufficiently redundant to be reduced by an application of ellipsis.

In sum, stripping can be licensed by anaphoricity to either the spoken content of an utterance or by possibly implicit question meanings implicated in the discourse. Stripping in coordinate structures, in principle, can employ either of these strategies. In fact, this ability to recover different types of antecedents for licensing ellipsis is exactly what one should expect from a licensing condition like the one introduced above in (49). As a system built on Rooth's (1992a) theory of focus interpretation, an antecedent for ellipsis should in principle be recoverable from anything to which $\sim P$ can be anaphoric, including both overt and implicitly accommodated linguistic material.[23] However, as the preceding discussion has proposed, sprouting is only possible by way of accommodating a QUD antecedent.

5.3 Failing to make accommodations for sprouting in comparatives

With the preceding discussion in hand, it is now possible to understand how the unavailability of sprouting in comparative stripping reflects the outright inability to license ellipsis.

(68) *Kim reads more carefully than NOVELS.

The idea being pursued is that, because the content of the comparative clause is Not-At-Issue with respect to the QUD, it is incapable of raising and being anaphoric to a QUD for the purpose of licensing ellipsis in the way we saw for coordinate structures. In conjunction with the inability for implicit arguments to provide suitable antecedents, the consequence is that no suitable antecedent for ellipsis can be felicitously recovered from the discourse when sprouted stripping targets a comparative clause.

Let us appreciate, first, that the spoken content in these configurations will fail to provide a suitable antecedent for ellipsis. The following example provides an abbreviated representation for sprouted stripping in a comparative clause that is adapted from the earlier representation in (52).

(69) *$[_{\text{CP}}$ Kim reads carefully $]_7$ more than $[[_{\text{PD}}$ NOVELS$_1$ ~~Kim reads t_1 carefully~~ $] \sim P_7$ $]$

i. $[\![\ \text{CP}_7\ ]\!]^{\text{o}} =$ that Kim was reading d-carefully

ii. $[\![\ \text{PD}\ ]\!]^{\text{f}} = \{\ p : p =$ that Kim was reading x d-carefully $\mid x \in Alt(\text{the novel})\ \}$

iii. $[\![\ \text{CP}_7\ ]\!]^{\text{o}} \notin [\![\ \text{FD}\ ]\!]^{\text{f}}$, ellipsis is not permitted.

[23] The term "in principle" is doing a significant amount work in this statement. The suitability of a potential antecedent will also be constrained by any independent requirements for structural isomorphism between an ellipsis site and an antecedent (Rooth 1992a, Merchant 2001, Chung 2005, and many others.) Additionally, the recoverability of any linguistic element to serve as an antecedent will be limited by any independent constraints on the discourse-accessibility of linguistic material (e.g., Hankamer 1979, Kehler 2000, Hardt & Romero 2004). While fully exploring these issues must be left for future research, the hope is that discourse constraints on recoverability may be made to follow more generally from constraints on QUD At-Issueness in the way proposed here.

Due to the presence of the implicit argument, the spoken content is, again, not a proposition of the correct shape to satisfy the redundancy condition on ellipsis.

The recourse that was taken in the context of coordinate stripping in section 5.2 was to rely instead on an implicit QUD to provide an appropriate antecedent. The proposal is that this will not be a successful strategy for resolving the instances of sprouted stripping in comparatives. Recall that the diagnostics presented in section 4.2 point to the conclusion that the content of a comparative clause is not packaged in such a way that it can be felicitously interpreted as being relevant to the QUD; it is QUD Not-At-Issue content. It is this fact that distinguishes the content of comparative clauses from the content of conjuncts. Moreover, this is what I am proposing precludes the content of comparative clauses from accommodating a QUD antecedent for ellipsis.

Consider the representation and calculation for ellipsis licensing in (70), which illustrates the consequences of failing to successfully accommodate a QUD as the antecedent for an instance of sprouted stripping in a comparative clause.

(70) *[Kim reads carefully] more than [[$_{\text{PD}}$ NOVELS$_1$ ~~Kim reads t_1 carefully~~] $\sim$ $\boldsymbol{P_{??}}$]

i. [Kim reads d-carefully] $\rightsquigarrow$ { What does Kim read d-carefully?, When does Kim read d-carefully?, Where does Kim read d-carefully?, With whom does Kim read d-carefully?, ... }

$[\![\text{AC}]\!]^{\text{o}} = ??$

ii. $[\![\text{PD}]\!]^{\text{f}} = \{\ p : \text{that Kim reads } x \text{ carefully} \mid x \in Alt(\text{novels})\ \}$

iii. ellipsis is not licensed.

We can assume that, in the same way as above, uttering *Kim reads d-carefully* possibly implicates a family of potential follow-up questions. Among these could be the question *What does Kim read d-carefully?* to which the content of the comparative clause, *that Kim reads novels d-carefully*, offers a congruent answer. The operative difference that has been motivated for the case at hand is that the content of the comparative clause is QUD Not-At-Issue. The intended effect is that the remnant *novels* cannot felicitously signal an intent to raise and resolve a QUD. As a result, the congruent question meaning *What does Kim read d-carefully?* is not felicitously established as the QUD. This has the knock-on effect that the variable argument P of $\sim$ fails to establish an anaphoric link with a suitable discourse antecedent that satisfies the redundancy condition on ellipsis. Consequently, ellipsis is not licensed in this configuration, exactly as desired.

This naturally raises the question of precisely why a Not-At-Issue status relative to the QUD should preclude the remnant from triggering accommodation of the QUD and employing it as the antecedent for the elided content. Ultimately, I am suggesting that we are witnessing a particular

instantiation of the following generalization from Aravind & Hackl 2017:51, (9):

(71) *Not-At-Issueness Constraint on Presuppositions*
Presuppositions cannot be used to directly target the Question Under Discussion.

This generalization is intended to describe the observation in (72) that participant B's attempt to address the QUD posed by participant A with the presupposed content of a factive predicate is infelicitous. The near-minimally differing response from B′ with a non-factive predicate demonstrates that same content is otherwise relevant to this QUD.

(72) A: Who is Taylor married to?
B: #Taylor's agent keeps forgetting that he is married to a writer.
B′: His agent thinks Taylor is married to a writer.
(adapted from Aravind & Hackl 2017:50, (7)–(8))

With regard to the content of a comparative clause, we have in fact already seen in section 4.2 that this material behaves similarly in failing to provide the content that is intended to address the QUD. Moreover, there is good reason to believe that this content also has the status of being presupposed. As Simons et al. (2010) and Beaver et al. (2017) argue, it is in precisely these circumstances that some material should behave as projective content. The family of sentences in (73) demonstrates that the proposition that Kim reads novels (however carefully) survives in the context of negation, modals, and questions.

(73) a. It's not the case that Kim reads articles more carefully than she reads novels.
b. It's possible that Kim reads articles more carefully than she reads novels.
c. Does Kim read the article articles more carefully than she reads novels?

Now, as presupposed content, the proposition *that Kim reads novels d-carefully* has the status of being known to be true or is required to be accommodated as such within the discourse. At the same time, this means that the question to which this information is relevant, namely *What does Kim read d-carefully?*, is marked as having been answered and resolved previously in the discourse. Aravind & Hackl (2017) point out that what it means for a question to serve as the QUD is necessarily at odds with this state of affairs. The QUD is by definition an issue that is unresolved in the discourse, and it serves to signal that additional contributions should serve to resolve that issue. So, while the question of what Kim reads with the specified degree of carefulness may well be made salient by the discourse in (70), it cannot felicitously be promoted to the QUD and addressed by means of the presupposed content represented by the stripped comparative clause. By doing so, we would be asking interlocutors to pursue a conflicting discourse strategy, whereby the comparative clause is meant to raise and address the very QUD that it flags as having been

settled.

In terms of the analysis presented in (70), the fact the question meaning *What does Kim read d-carefully?* cannot be felicitously elevated to the status of the QUD by the content of the comparative clause, means that it cannot serve as the antecedent for the $\sim P$ that is interpreted within the comparative clause. Given that sprouted stripping requires antecedence to the QUD, and that this achieved through anaphoricity with $\sim P$, it will not be possible to employ this question meaning as an antecedent for the purpose of licensing ellipsis. Because no suitable antecedent can be found otherwise, ellipsis cannot be licensed under these circumstances.

In sum, the analysis proposes that an appropriate QUD for satisfying the redundancy condition on ellipsis is not a recoverable antecedent for the purpose of licensing ellipsis in a comparative clause. This is asserted to reflect the observations above and in section 4.2 that the content of comparative clauses is not appropriately packaged in a way to be construed as addressing the QUD. Part of this inappropriate packaging is the fact that this material contains presupposed information. The inability to be anaphoric to a QUD antecedent, along the absence of a suitable antecedent in the syntactic representation of the utterance, results in a failure to license ellipsis.

5.4 Inner antecedents offer accommodations for ellipsis

The previous two sections presented two claims that are instrumental to the proposed analysis of stripping in comparative clauses. The first, from section 5.2, is that implicit arguments do not contribute to a well-formed antecedent for licensing stripping. The second claim, which we just saw in section 5.3, is that a QUD of the appropriate shape is not a felicitously recoverable antecedent for a stripped comparative clause. While these claims taken together offer an explanation for the lack of sprouted stripping in comparative clauses, a reviewer cautions that, without saying more, we risk developing an analysis that would fail to allow for stripping in comparatives clauses when given a so-called "inner antecedent", such as the indefinite *something* in (74):

(74) Kim reads **SOMETHING** more carefully than NOVELS.

To appreciate the issue, consider the abbreviated representation for this example in (75) and the accompanying calculation for ellipsis-licensing. Note first that the spoken content of the root clause would standardly be expected to deliver the ordinary semantic value in (75i). It is not obvious that an element with this meaning could be generated as a member of the focus-semantic value of the PD, which we noted is computed pointwise while simply replacing the focus-marked *novels* with its discourse-salient alternatives.

(75) $[_{\text{CP}}$ Kim reads **SOMETHING** carefully $]_8$ more than $[[_{\text{PD}}$ **NOVELS$_1$** ~~Kim reads t_1~~ $] \sim P_8$ $]$

i. $[\![\text{CP}_8]\!]^{\text{o}} = \exists x$. that Kim reads x d-carefully

ii. $[\![\text{PD}]\!]^{\text{f}} = \{\ p : p =$ that Kim reads x d-carefully $\mid x \in Alt(\text{novels})\ \}$

iii. $[\![\text{CP}_8]\!]^{\text{o}} \notin [\![\text{PD}]\!]^{\text{f}}$, ellipsis is incorrectly not permitted?

Of course, the mechanisms for generating alternatives could be enriched to ensure that the computation in (75) succeeds. However, even if this is manageable, it is still not obvious that it would be desirable to allow the indefinite *something* to serve as an alternative to *novels*. The infelicity of (76a) suggests that *something* does not satisfy the additive presupposition of *too* in the way that we have observed from more contentful nominals, like in (76b).

(76) a. #Kim reads **SOMETHING** and she read **NOVELS** too.

b. Kim reads **ARTICLES** and she reads **NOVELS** too.

Additionally, we should note that the kinds of implicit arguments that we have been dealing with throughout the manuscript would in fact standardly be treated as existentially bound variables in the semantic representation of the utterance (e.g., Bhatt & Pancheva 2017). Treated as such, the root clause of the familiar example of failed sprouted stripping in (77) would in fact receive the same ordinary semantic value that we see in (75).

(77) a. *Kim reads more carefully than NOVELS.

b. *$[_{\text{CP}}$ Kim reads carefully $]_7$ more than $[[_{\text{PD}}$ **NOVELS$_1$** ~~Kim reads t_1~~ $] \sim P_7$ $]$

i. $[\![\text{CP}_7]\!]^{\text{o}} = \exists x$. that Kim reads x d-carefully

ii. $[\![\text{PD}]\!]^{\text{f}} = \{\ p : p =$ that Kim reads x d-carefully $\mid x \in Alt(\text{novels})\ \}$

iii. $[\![\text{CP}_7]\!]^{\text{o}} \notin [\![\text{PD}]\!]^{\text{f}}$, ellipsis is not permitted

To the extent that we expect for the calculation in (75) to result in the licensing of stripping, it seems that we should equally expect for stripping to be available in (77), which it is of course not. The issue is made more acute once we appreciate the fact that it is not possible in these cases to fall back on an accommodated QUD for an antecedent. As just noted, the instrumental claim of section 5.3 is that stripping in comparatives cannot felicitously be anaphoric to the QUD.

Therefore, something must be said both for how it is—within the limits of the proposed analysis—that indefinites contribute to an antecedent for stripping in comparatives in (75) and that implicit objects are differentiated in such a way that they continue to fail to contribute to an antecedent in (77).

For a solution, I propose that we again follow AnderBois (2011, 2014) to capitalize on previous claims that indefinites including *something*, like *wh*-constituents, can serve as alternative-generating expressions (e.g., Kratzer & Shimoyama 2002). The representation and calculation in

(78), therefore, are more representative of examples with an indefinite correlate.

(78) $[_{\text{CP}}$ Kim reads SOMETHING d-carefully $]_9$

more than $[[_{\text{PD}}$ NOVELS$_1$ $\langle$~~Kim reads t_1 d-carefully~~$\rangle$ $]\sim P_9$ $]$

i. $[\![\ \text{CP}_9\ ]\!]^{\text{o}} = \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{that Kim reads articles } d\text{-carefully} \\ \text{that Kim reads novels } d\text{-carefully} \\ \text{that Kim reads magazines } d\text{-carefully} \\ \text{that Kim reads comics } d\text{-carefully} \\ \ldots \end{array} \right\}$

$= \{\ p : p = \text{that Kim reads } x\ d\text{-carefully} \mid x \in Alt(\text{something})\ \}$

ii. $[\![\ \text{PD}\ ]\!]^{\text{f}} = \{\ p : p = \text{that Kim reads } x\ d\text{-carefully} \mid x \in Alt(\text{novels})\ \}$

iii. $[\![\ \text{CP}_9\ ]\!]^{\text{o}} \subseteq [\![\ \text{PD}\ ]\!]^{\text{f}}$, ellipsis is permitted

In deriving the ordinary semantic value of the root clause the indefinite *something* is replaced by contextually salient values to generate alternatives that "expand" by pointwise computation to the level of the CP. Much like we assumed for constituent questions, the result is an ordinary semantic value that denotes a set of alternative meanings that is presented in (75i). Because this set is a subset of the familiar focus-semantic value of the stripped comparative clause in (75ii), ellipsis is straightforwardly licensed without recourse to accommodation of a QUD.[24]

The ability for indefinite "inner antecedents" to license stripping in a comparative clause, therefore, can be understood as an effect of their ability to denote sets of alternatives that satisfy the adopted Roothian condition on licensing ellipsis. Moreover, we have already seen good reason in section 5.2 to believe that the ability to evoke alternatives is a property that distinguishes indefinites and implicit objects. Recall that implicit arguments do not evoke the kinds of alternatives that give rise to scalar implicatures. Assuming that implicit objects fail to provide or evoke sets of alternatives more generally, it is possible to maintain that they do not contribute to a well-formed structural antecedent for stripping nor do they allow for the accommodation of an implicit antecedent in the way that we have seen here.

6 Extending the analysis to other stripping operations

In this final substantive section, we investigate a prediction of the analysis presented above. To the extent that some domain permits stripping, the expectation should be that it will permit sprouting only if that domain is At-Issue with respect to the QUD. Let us state this formally as in (79):

[24] The reader might see Thoms 2015 for a discussion of the kinds of constraints and limitations that might determine the ways in which alternatives can be generated and used for licensing ellipsis.

(79) *QUD At-Issueness gates sprouting*
For any domain D, such that stripping is permitted in D, sprouted stripping in D is possible only if D can be At-Issue relative to the QUD.

We will test this prediction in two domains: temporal adverbial clauses and *like*-clauses.[25] While both constructions have been argued to be reduced via a stripping-like operation, neither permits sprouting. This coincides, again, with the Not-At-Issueness and presupposed status of the content embedded in these constructions. As per the analysis, it is an inability to trigger the accommodation of and address the necessary QUD that precludes the identification of an acceptable antecedent for ellipsis in these domains.

6.1 Stripping in temporal adverbial clauses

Non-coordinate stripping has been proposed as a mechanism for the reduction of temporal adverbial clauses introduced by *before* and *after*. A relevant pair of examples with the temporal connective *after* is provided in (80):

(80) a. Kim read THE ARTICLE after she read THE NOVEL.
b. Kim read THE ARTICLE after ~~Kim read~~ THE NOVEL.

The idea that temporal adverbials can be targeted by an operation like stripping can be traced back to Geis (1970). More explicit proposals regarding the reduction mechanism have subsequently been put forward by Larson (1987), Thompson (2005) and Overfelt (2021).[26]

Overfelt (2021) argues that many of the indicators for clausal ellipsis that are observed for comparative stripping are also observed for examples like (80b). This is taken to motivate an analysis that employs the same kind of Move-and-Delete stripping derivation that we have seen in coordinate and comparative constructions.[27]

[25] See footnote 9 for other potential stripping configurations where we might evaluate the generalization in (79). These particular cases were chosen based on the degree to which I am confident they involve a stripping operation comparable to what we have seen above.

[26] Just as with comparative clauses, reduced temporal adverbial clauses have been given direct analyses, whereby the phrasal constituent combines directly with the temporal connective (Penka & von Stechow 2011). This alternative representation appears to be available in as far as the phrasal constituent is compatible with a implicit run time argument, such as *the movie* in the example below:

(i) Russel left after the movie.

Examples of this type are not plausibly derived from an underlying clause source via ellipsis: *#Russel left after the movie left*. Therefore, just as with comparatives, the possibility for a direct phrasal analysis is a confounding factor in that it provides a means for generating putative instances of sprouting.

[27] For the sake of accuracy, Overfelt (2021) actually proposes that temporal adverbials targeted for stripping are adjoined at the level of the *v*P and embed a *v*P complement. This makes the relevant stripping operation similar to previous proposals by Pancheva (2009) for comparatives and by Weir (2014b) for *why*-stripping. As noted previously,

(81) Kim read THE ARTICLE [after **THE NOVEL**$_1$ ⟨ ~~Kim read t_1~~ ⟩]

The examples above demonstrate that stripping in temporal adverbial clauses is acceptable when the remnant is paired with an overt correlate in the matrix clause. Of interest here is the fact that stripping in temporal adverbial clauses, like comparative clauses, does not permit sprouted remnants:

(82) a. When she has to read for class, Kim reads after she reads **A NOVEL**.
b. *When she has to read for class, Kim reads after **A NOVEL**.

Importantly, this is again a case where it can be demonstrated that the ungrammaticality of (82b) reflects an inability to license ellipsis. The acceptability of the unreduced example in (82a) suggests that nothing in principle precludes the derivation or representation of the source structure for ellipsis.

Furthermore, like comparative clauses, the content of temporal adverbial clauses appears to be packaged in such as way that it cannot felicitously be construed as content that is relevant to the QUD. This is a conclusion about temporal adverbial clauses that Gor & Syrett (2019) reach independently on the basis of the disjoint reference effects associated with Condition C. With respect to the diagnostic presented in section 4.2, we see in (83) that it is not possible to construe the content of a temporal adverbial clause as the sole content relevant to answering the QUD.

(83) A: What did Kim read?
B: #Kim worked on her article after she read THE NOVEL.

As Gor & Syrett (2019) also note, this is in line with the standard view of the content of temporal adverbial clauses as presupposed information, a claim made as early as Hooper & Thompson 1973 and reiterated in Newman 2021. The examples below show that, indeed, the proposition *that Kim read the novel* behaves like projective content in the relevant contexts:

(84) a. It's not the case that Kim read the article after she read the novel.
b. It's possible that Kim read the article after she read the novel.
c. Did Kim read the article the article after she read the novel?

In light of these observations and given the analysis presented in the previous section, the lack of sprouted stripping in the temporal adverbial clause of (82b) is entirely expected. For the same reasons that have been offered above, the implicit argument in the matrix clause will not contribute to a suitable antecedent for the purpose of establishing redundancy for ellipsis. This is

issues related to the amount of material targeted by ellipsis must be left for future research.

demonstrated in (85):[28]

(85) *[$_{CP}$ Kim reads at t]$_2$ after [[$_{PD}$ A NOVEL$_1$ ~~Kim reads t_1 at t~~] $\sim P_2$]

i. $[\![\text{CP}_2]\!]^o =$ that Kim reads at t

ii. $[\![\text{PD}]\!]^f = \{\ p : \text{that Kim reads } x \text{ at } t \mid x \in Alt(\text{a novel})\ \}$

iii. $[\![\text{CP}_2]\!]^o \notin [\![\text{PD}]\!]^f$, ellipsis is not licensed.

Moreover, the QUD Not-At-Issue status of the content of the temporal adverbial clause means that it cannot be construed as content that is relevant to the QUD. Assuming that the content of the matrix clause implicates a family of following up question, the remnant is part of discourse content that cannot felicitously signal the need to accommodate the QUD to which it is relevant.

(86) *[Kim reads at t] after [[$_{PD}$ A NOVEL$_1$ ~~Kim reads t_1 at t~~] $\sim P_{??}$]

i. [Kim reads at t] $\rightsquigarrow$ $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{What does Kim read at } t\text{?}, \\ \text{Where does Kim read at } t\text{?}, \\ \text{With whom does Kim read at } t\text{?}, \\ \text{Why does Kim read at } t\text{?}, \\ \ldots \end{array} \right\}$

$[\![\text{AC}]\!]^o = ??$

ii. $[\![\text{FD}]\!]^f = \{p : \text{that Kim reads } x \text{ at } t \mid x \in Alt(\text{a novel})\ \}$

iii. ellipsis is not licensed.

Because no explicitly offered material in the discourse provides a suitable antecedent and because no suitable QUD antecedent can be felicitously accommodated, sprouted stripping cannot be licensed in a temporal adverbial clause.

6.2 Stripping in *like*-clauses

Yoshida (2013) provides evidence—again, much like what has been compiled in the literature on ellipsis more generally—that *like*-clauses of the kind in (87) can be reduced by stripping.

(87) a. MICHAEL must not dance like FIONA dances.

b. MICHAEL must not dance like FIONA ~~dances~~.

(adapted from Yoshida 2013:305, (1))

[28] On the basis of facts similar to those put forward for comparative clauses, there is evidence for an operator-variable chain inside temporal adverbial clauses that finds a parallel relationship in the matrix clause (Geis 1970, Larson 1987, Overfelt 2021). I include the tail of these chains (*at t*) in the examples in the text for the sake of comparison with the analysis of comparatives. As mentioned in footnote 16, it does not seem that these dependencies play a role in the acceptability of stripping.

In the same way as we have seen throughout, this treatment has the phrasal remnant of the stripping operation escape ellipsis by way of movement to the edge of the embedded clause.[29] The example in (88) provides a familiar derivation and representation:

(88) Kim reads **ARTICLES** [like **NOVELS**$_1$ ⟨ ~~Kim reads t_1~~ ⟩]

The possibility of sprouting in reduced *like*-clauses is discussed briefly in reference to the following sets of examples. The judgements are presented as they are reported in Yoshida 2013:308, (11).

(89) a. Michael (hatefully) served dinner **to CARLA**
like **to GILROY**$_1$ ⟨ ~~he served dinner t_1~~ ⟩

b. Michael (hatefully) served dinner **to CARLA**
like **GILROY**$_1$ ⟨ ~~he served dinner to t_1~~ ⟩

(90) a. Michael (hatefully) served dinner like **to GILROY**$_1$ ⟨ ~~he served dinner t_1~~ ⟩

b. *Michael (hatefully) served dinner like **GILROY**$_1$ ⟨ ~~he served dinner to t_1~~ ⟩

The examples of stripping in (89) with an overt correlate for the remnant set a baseline for the acceptability of stripping. These are to be contrasted with the examples of sprouting in (90). For Yoshida (2013), the inability to strand a preposition associated with the sprouted remnant in (90b) serves as evidence that *like*-clauses are reduced by clausal ellipsis, given the similar behavior that is observed in sluicing (see Merchant 2001, Chung 2005, et seq.).

To my ear, there is indeed a contrast between the examples in (90) in the stated direction. However, there is still a contrast between the sprouting example in (90a) and the example with an overt correlate in (89a). Sprouting, for me, is degraded at best in this example and ungrammatical at worst. I am not able at present to account for the variation in judgements regarding these particular data. However, I would point to examples like (91) below, which can be contrasted with example (88) and allows for significantly clearer intuitions. In such cases, with a direct object remnant, sprouting clearly results in ungrammaticality. Importantly, the variant of this example without ellipsis is significantly more acceptable.

(91) a. Even when she's supposed to be studying, Kim reads like she reads **NOVELS**.

b. *Even when she's supposed to be studying, Kim reads like **NOVELS**$_1$ ⟨ ~~Kim reads t_1~~ ⟩

To the extent that the content of *like*-clauses behaves like QUD Not-At-Issue content, the lack of sprouting observed in examples like (91) would be entirely expected. As shown in (92), content

[29] Once again, for the sake of accuracy, Yoshida (2013) in fact argues that reduced *like*-clauses can be adjoined to various positions on the verbal spine and contain an elided TP constituent.

packaged within a *like*-clause fails to serve as content that solely provides the answer to a QUD.

(92) A: What does Kim read?
B: #Kim reads like she reads NOVELS.

This again coincides with the observation that the content of the *like*-clause is presupposed material. The proposition that Kim reads novels survives in the context of negation, modals, and questions, as illustrated below:

(93) a. It's not the case that Kim reads articles like she reads novels.
b. It's possible that Kim reads articles like she reads novels.
c. Does Kim read articles like she reads novels?

The explanation for the restriction on sprouting in (91b) will be familiar at this point. The content of the matrix clause will not offer a suitable antecedent for licensing ellipsis on account of the remnant being paralleled by an implicit argument.[30]

(94) *$[_{\text{CP}}$ Kim reads as m $]_3$ like $[[_{\text{PD}}$ NOVELS$_1$ ~~Kim reads t_1 as m~~ $] \sim P_3$ $]$
i. $[\![\ \text{CP}_3\ ]\!]^{\text{o}} =$ that Kim reads as m
ii. $[\![\ \text{PD}\ ]\!]^{\text{f}} = \{\ p : \text{that Kim reads } x \text{ as } m \mid x \in Alt(\text{novels})\ \}$
iii. $[\![\ \text{CP}_3\ ]\!]^{\text{o}} \notin [\![\ \text{PD}\ ]\!]^{\text{f}}$, ellipsis is not licensed.

The fact that the content of the *like*-clause is QUD Not-At-Issue material means, once again, that the remnant of the ellipsis operation is incapable of felicitously raising or addressing a congruent QUD to serve as an antecedent; see (95):

(95) *[Kim reads as m] like $[[_{\text{FD}}$ NOVELS$_1$ ~~Kim reads t_1 as m~~ $] \sim P_{??}$ $]$
i. [Kim reads as m] $\rightsquigarrow$ $\left\{\begin{array}{c} \text{What does Kim read as } m?, \\ \text{Where does Kim read as } m?, \\ \text{With whom does Kim read as } m?, \\ \text{Why does Kim read as } m?, \\ \ldots \end{array}\right\}$
$[\![\ \text{AC}\ ]\!]^{\text{o}} = ??$
ii. $[\![\ \text{FD}\ ]\!]^{\text{f}} = \{p : \text{that Kim reads } x \text{ as } m \mid x \in Alt(\text{novels})\ \}$
iii. ellipsis is not licensed.

[30] Though it is not included in Yoshida 2013, I believe there is reason to assume, on the basis of the scope-ambiguity and island data familiar from comparatives and temporal adverbial clauses, that *like*-clause constructions contain operator-variable chains. I include the tails of these chains (*as m(anner)*) here for the sake of comparison. However, the analysis does not depend on this decision.

Therefore, in exactly the same way as we have seen for comparative clauses and temporal adverbial clauses, sprouted stripping cannot be licensed as a consequence of the inability to recover or accommodate and antecedent for ellipsis. The analysis maintains that this is a consequence of the QUD Not-At-Issue status on the content embedded in these domains.

7 Conclusion

The primary empirical focus of the manuscript has been the unavailability of sprouted stripping in comparative clauses as well as temporal adverbial clauses and *like*-clauses. This is in contrast to coordination structures containing *and* and *but*, which otherwise permit sprouted stripping. The analysis argued that what makes those domains that preclude sprouting a natural class is the Not-At-Issueness of their propositional content with respect to the QUD. This made it possible to claim that sprouted stripping requires an anaphoric link to an accommodated QUD in the discourse, which is precluded by the discourse status of the content embedded by these structures. Paired with the claim that implicit arguments do not contribute to suitable antecedents for ellipsis, the inability to sprout a remnant specifically in the domains under investigation, was the result of an inability to license ellipsis.

The analysis was built upon a theory of ellipsis licensing that, in principle, permits stripping to recover an antecedent from either the spoken content of an utterance or an implicit QUD. This type of flexibility in the resolution of ellipsis is expected given a theory of ellipsis licensing that employs the system of focus interpretation proposed by Rooth (1992a,b). Future research might investigate whether this offers utility in understanding other varieties of ellipsis beyond stripping. It must also fall to future research to identify the constraints on this proposed flexibility in antecedent recovery. However, to the extent that the QUD serves as one of the possible sources for antecedents, the expectation is that the relevant constraints should coincide with the constraints on anaphoricity to QUDs. The previous discussion has attempted to show that, at least in the domain of sprouted stripping, this is possible.

The proposed analysis also rested heavily on a concept of antecedent accommodation that deviates in non-trivial ways from what is arguably the baseline theory of accommodation that originates with Fox 1999, 2000. Accommodation in that line of research is constrained to content that is entailed or presupposed by previously spoken material, or is restricted to the reuse of the spoken material. The proposal advanced in the manuscript builds instead on an influential line of research proposing that resolving the meaning of an ellipsis site might involve accommodating a question meaning in the discourse (Ginzburg & Sag 2001, et seq.). This made it possible to accommodate antecedents from question meanings that are merely conversationally implicated in the discourse, neither entailed nor presupposed. It of course remains to be demonstrated that this adjustment

to the constraints on accommodation does not overgenerate. However, the expectation again is that constraints built into the QUD-model will coincide with the possibility of accommodating antecedents for ellipsis. Again, the previous discussion of stripping suggests that this is possible.

Finally, the analysis that was presented above makes a fairly robust prediction. To the extent that some domain permits stripping, that domain should allow sprouting only if its content is QUD At-Issue. Section 6 put this prediction to the test in two additional domains: temporal adverbial clauses and *like*-clauses. In these constructions, too, it was found that the QUD Not-At-Issue status of some content, determined by its status as presupposed content, coincides with an inability for hosting a sprouted remnant of stripping. This predication, of course, goes beyond the constructions investigated here. The expectation is that QUD-At-Issueness could similarly gate sprouting in other species of ellipsis, including sluicing and VP-ellipsis (see Overfelt 2024 on sprouting in VP-ellipsis). Moreover, this prediction is not indexed to any particular language. We should expect that the gating effect that QUD At-Issueness has on sprouted stripping, and possibly other species of ellipsis, is part of a cross-linguistically robust generalization about ellipsis. The hope, therefore, is that the generalization in (79) reveals a productive line of future investigation.

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