In Danish – as in the other Mainland Scandinavian languages – unstressed, bare pronominal objects shift to a position preceding sentential adverbs when the pronoun would otherwise be initial in the VP („Object-shift“) (Holmberg 1999 among many others). However, Andréasson (2008, 2010) shows for Swedish and Danish that pronominal objects with propositional antecedents are more reluctant to shift than pronominal objects with entity-denoting antecedents.

The pronominal object det (‘it’) in (1a) takes as its antecedent the VP skele til pengene (‘consider the money’) and the pronominal object does not shift as shown in (1b).

Andréasson (2008) proposes that anaphors with propositional antecedents tend to remain in-situ in what she calls „non-factive“ environments such as the wh-question in (1), because they are less cognitively accessible than anaphors in factive environments. I propose that there is a syntactic explanation for the failure of det (‘it’) in (1) to shift. The modal skulle (‘shall’) only allows a VP-complement, so the pronominal NP-complement det (‘it’) is a non-canonical complement in the sense that it does not match the category selection of the verb. Such mismatches are well-known from movement paradoxes where a fronted filler does not match the category of its gap as in (2) where the fronted CP is associated with an NP-gap (Bresnan 2001 a.o.). It seems that such non-canonical complements are only licensed in the discourse-prominent first position of the clause (SpecCP). However, (1) shows that a non-canonical complement can also be in a post-verbal position if the first position is not available for independent reasons: (1) is a V1-conditional so SpecCP has to be empty (or it is occupied by a silent operator). In this case the non-canonical complement can only be in-situ as shown in (1b) (as also discussed in Andréasson 2010).

Based on an analysis of VP-anaphora in contexts requiring Presupposition Accommodation, I show that the first position (SpecCP) as well as the in-situ position are discourse-prominent while the shifted position contains backgrounded information. I suggest that the restriction on non-canonical complements that they be either fronted or in-situ is related to information structure: a non-canonical complement cannot be information-structurally backgrounded – it has to be in a discourse prominent position. This analysis explains why a VP-anaphor is not always in the in-situ position in a “non-factive” environment: A VP-anaphor is allowed to shift if the verb independently allows an NP complement. Here the anaphor is not a non-canonical complement. The verb savne (‘to miss’) allows both a VP and an NP as shown in (4) and the anaphor is allowed to shift as in (5). I present an OT-analysis to account for the data.
1. a. Skal man skele til pengene og hvem skal ikke det?
   must you consider PREP money.def and who must not that
   ‘If you have to take the money into consideration, and who don’t’
   (Example from KorpusDK)
   b. ?? og hvem skal det ikke?
   and who must that not

2. [that he was ill]CP we talked about ___NP for days

3. A: Peter has [invited his divorced wife]
   B: a. Ja, skulle han ikke det?
      yes should he not that
      ‘Yes, shouldn’t he?’
   b. ?? Ja, skulle han det ikke
      yes should he that not

4. a. Jeg savner mine friaftner
    I miss my nights.out
    ‘I miss my nights out.’
   b. Jeg savner at gå ud
    I miss to go out
    ‘I miss going out.’

5. A: I haven’t [been to a pub since I became a father]
   B: a. ?? Hm, savner du ikke det
      Hm miss you not that
      ‘Hm, don’t you miss that?’
   b. Hm, savner du det ikke?
      Hm, miss you that not

References:

Andréasson, Maia (2008): Not All Objects are Born Alike – Accessibility as a Key to Object-Shift in Swedish and Danish. In: Butt, Miriam and Tracy H. King (eds.): Proceedings of the LFG08, University of Sydney, CSLI Publications, p. 26-45.