Ellipsis in tautologous conditionals
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Ellipsis parallelism
A semantic parallelism condition on ellipsis (cf. Rooth 1992a,b; Fox 1999):
- Ellipsis of a constituent ε is licensed only if at LF there is some constituent Ε that
dominates ε and the discourse contains an antecedent LF A such that either:
  (i) \([A_1] \vDash \epsilon \wedge (A[1] \vDash \epsilon)\) or \(\vDash \epsilon \vDash (A[1] \vDash \epsilon)\);
  \(\vDash \epsilon \vDash (A[1] \vDash \epsilon)\) or \(\vDash \epsilon \vDash (A[1] \vDash \epsilon)\);
- A = question antecedent (assuming Hamblin 1973)

Independent motivation:
- (i) declarative: focus membership – John likes Mary. BILL does likewise too.
- contrast condition – John likes Mary. *Yes, JOHN does like Mary.
- (ii) questions: Who likes Mary? JOHN does like Mary.

Main points
- Competing accounts of a novel observation – ellipsis is ungrammatical in tautologous conditionals:
  o If John is wrong, then he is *(wrong)*
- Ellipsis: a semantic parallelism condition on ellipsis
- Tautology: extensions to T-triviality
- Contrast in ellipsis parallelism sensitive to intonability

Data

L-triviality
(Logical-triviality (Gajewski 2002, 2009):
- Aim: reconcile explanations of ungrammaticality in terms of triviality with the fact that we can say trivial things
  o e.g. *There is every student (Barwise & Cooper 1981) vs. If it rains, it rains
- L-triviality: sentences with trivial logical skeletons are ungrammatical
- Logical skeleton (LS): the LF configuration of a sentence's logical items where all occurrences of non-logical constants are treated as independent
- LS for If it rains, it rains = *(if P Q)* – trivial but not L-trivial, hence grammatical
  o logical item if retained
  o independent occurrences of non-logical constant rain replaced by independent arbitrary constants, P and Q
  o perfectly contingent sentences share this LS; e.g. If it rains, it pours

(1) L-trivial and ungrammatical assuming two extensions to Gajewski’s system
  - Ellipsis identity holds over Logical Skeletons
  - non-logical constants are treated as dependent under ellipsis
  - (ii) Coferential terms are dependent in Logical Skeletons
  - (ii) reduces to (i) on the view that pronouns are determiners whose complements have undergone NP-ellipsis (Ellbourne 2001), i.e. he John

(2) – ellipsis incorrectly predicted bad in all trivilities
- unless the intonability of disjunction and conjunction (e.g. Akatib et al. 2013) render (2) non-L-trivial

(3) – despite (3b) = (1), L-triviality successfully circumvented by sourcing the antecedent from (3a)

(4) – both ellipsis depend on the same antecedent
- hopefully incorrect prediction of ungrammaticality

L-trivial

(1) – ungrammatical because ellipsis fails the contrast condition
- declarative antecedent A0 in the if-clause subject to clause (i)
- polar focus alternatives introduced by is, mean \([A_0] \subseteq \epsilon \wedge (A[1] \subseteq \epsilon)\) is satisfied
- but contrast condition \([A] \neq \epsilon \wedge (A[1] \neq \epsilon)\) not met
- A cannot merely be in the alternatives of E; must be a ‘proper’ alternative
- contrast condition often omitted – Fox (1999); even Rooth (1992b)

(2) – opposition of positive A0 and negative E satisfies the contrast condition
- focus membership satisfied as for (1)

(3) – sourcing the antecedent from a polar question successfully circumvents the contrast condition by invoking clause (ii)
- the antecedent definitely comes from the question, not the if-clause:
  o If Fred is silly, if Fred is wrong, then he is silly=*(wrong)*

(4) – (a) can have a trivial meaning when both ellipses are resolved via the same antecedent, as in (b)
- each ellipse separately and successfully licensed in the same way as (3)

However, (4a) can also be judged acceptable in isolation
- willingness to assume that a discourse could readily resolve the ellipses
- presence of a potential but unlicensed antecedent in the if-clause in (1) precludes such deference to discourse

(5) – another tautologous ellipsis contrast between (a) and (b). (cf. Horn 1981)
- regardless of how the free relative DP takes scope to resolve antecedent containment (ACD), ellipsis in (b) fails the contrast condition, since \([A] = \epsilon)\)
- (c) with ellipsis and embedding under an intonational predicate is grammatical
  o de re only: what John actually eats = what Mary believes he to eat.
  o contrast satisfied intensionally: actual world vs. Mary’s belief worlds

References
Korn, Martin (2010). A Theory of Focus Interpretation. Natural language Semantics 18. MIT.

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Ellipsis parallelism

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Ellipsis in tautologous free relatives

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