

Advertising conditions on ellipsis

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Metalinguistic ellipsis

- Corpora usually tell us how a construction works.
- This talk uses attested examples to show how ellipsis doesn't.
- Adverts, titles and slogans can flout conditions on ellipsis to playful and memorable effect:
 - (1) a. Everyday vehicles that aren't. (= 9)
 - b. Yes We Can (= 6)
 - c. Binominal *each*: A DP that may not be. (= 47)
- 'Metalinguistic ellipsis' strains the relationship between antecedent and ellipsis – feeling awkward, but all the more noticeable for it.
- Several conditions on ellipsis can be observed in the breach.
- Further than Stockwell (2025): which conditions and why? and what is it?

Overview

Metalinguistic ellipsis can...

Recoverability

source antecedents from
obscure places

Ambiguity

Argument structure

Antecedent containment

flout semantic and structural
identity conditions

How does metalinguistic ellipsis
work?

Adnominal antecedents

source antecedents from
illicit places

Contrast

Sluicing

Warner

not disobey contrast (in principle)
nor affect sluicing (in practice?)

What can metalinguistic ellipsis
not do?

Double ellipsis

Punning

Language games

Reduced Written Register

be compared to...

What is metalinguistic ellipsis?

Recoverability

- Ellipsis would undermine form-meaning mapping, but for being recoverable from an antecedent (Fiengo & Lasnik 1972).
- ‘Surface’ vs. ‘deep’ anaphora (Hankamer & Sag 1976):¹

(2) (Context: Sag produces a cleaver and prepares to hack off his left hand.)

a. Hankamer: #Don’t be alarmed, he never actually does.

ellipsis

b. Hankamer: Don’t be alarmed, he never actually does it.

pro-form

- This most fundamental condition on ellipsis is floutable to metalinguistic effect:

Flouting recoverability

- Hoarding advert for the launch of a UK newspaper in 1986:

(3) It is. Are you? The Independent (Garnham & Oakhill 1992)

- Wall's ice cream – likely riffing on (3), (4) on a background of tessellating triangles, then (5):

(4) It isn't. Are you? (Garnham & Oakhill 1992)

(5) Tempo. It isn't square.

- Slogan from Obama 2008:

(6) Yes We Can

- Antecedents available in Obama's speeches; but standalone, supply your own.
- Clearly unacceptable outside of their advertising and sloganising contexts – *It is what? It isn't what? We can what?*

Ambiguity

- A recovered antecedent must be ‘identical’ to the ellipsis (e.g. Hankamer 1971, Sag 1976).
- Ambiguities must be resolved in the same way across antecedent and ellipsis:

(7) a. John visited the bank before Mary visited the bank. *4 meanings*

b. John visited the bank before Mary did. *2 meanings*

- Lexical (7); idiomatic (8):

(8) a. John didn't lift a finger, and neither did Mary lift a finger. *4 meanings*

b. John didn't lift a finger, and neither did Mary. *2 meanings*

Flouting lexical ambiguity

- Flouting identity to resolve lexical ambiguities differently in antecedent vs. ellipsis:

(9) Everyday vehicles that aren't. (Suzuki, McQuarrie & Mick 1996)

- *Everyday*: 'for daily use' as the pronounced antecedent → 'ordinary' in the ellipsis.

(10) It isn't square. Are you? (combining Wall's' 4 and 5)

Square: 'equal-sided rectangle' in the antecedent → 'boringly conventional' in the ellipsis

(11) The Independent. It is. Are you?

'free of constraining ownership' → 'free-thinking'

(12) Specsavers: Our vision is to protect yours.²

'overarching purpose' → 'eyesight'

Note: NP ellipsis

(13) Keytruda: No one wants to be known for cancer, but a treatment can be.³

'recognised for' → 'discovered'

Flouting idiom ambiguity

- Flouting identity to resolve idiom ambiguities differently in antecedent vs. ellipsis:

(14) I keep my hands clean! Why can't he? (Lava soap, Todó 2009):

- *To keep one's hands clean*: literal 'I use soap' in the antecedent → 'why can't he keep out of sordid business' in the ellipsis.
- Opposite way round in the first ellipsis of the Hershey's jingle:⁴

(15) Sometimes you feel like a nut,
Sometimes you don't.
Almond Joy's got nuts,
Mounds don't.

- *to feel like a nut*: idiomatic 'consider oneself crazy' → literal 'fancy eating some, e.g., almonds'.

Register specificity

- The identity condition that requires ambiguities to be fixed across antecedent and ellipsis can be flouted to metalinguistic effect in advertising.
- Contexts where playfulness and memorability is the aim; vs. mundane, sincere failures:

(16) John takes a daily jog through the beautiful grounds of a country estate.

*So his everyday run isn't.

(cf. 9)

(17) I need to put this fingertip heart rate monitor on you, so please lift a finger.

*It's so easy, you don't even need to!

(cf. 14)

- The invitation to reinterpret material between antecedent and ellipsis is specifically metalinguistic.

What about other ambiguity?

- To the extent that idioms are phrasal entries in the lexicon, idiom = lexical ambiguity.
- What about scope (Fox 2000)?:

- (18) a. Some girl saw every teacher before some boy saw every teacher. *4 meanings*
b. Some girl saw every teacher before some boy did. *2 meanings*

- A limp constructed attempt at flouting scope:

- (19) (Context: a television advert for a selection box of six different chocolate bars.)
(Scene: six children each enjoying one of the chocolate bars.)
A kid will love every treat. *every > a*
(Cut to scene: one adult devouring all six chocolate bars.)
??A grown-up will, too! *a > every*

- A principled gap? Or are scope ambiguities already too difficult? (Cf. sluicing, below.)

- What about structure?

- (20) a. Mary saw the man with the binoculars before Jane saw the man with the binoculars. 4 vs.
b. Mary saw the man with the binoculars before Jane did. *2 meanings*

- Arguably in (21) and (22):

- (21) Costa: Everything is made a little better when your coffee is.⁵
[make [things better]] [[make coffee] better]

- Arguably in (22):

- (22) Netflix: You have downloads which are ready to watch when you are.⁶
[OP_i ready [PRO to watch t_i]] [you are ready [PRO to watch (them_i)]]

- Though the small clause vs. nominal object complement of *make* and the thematic ambiguity on *ready* may already involve separate lexical entries, or be better counted among argument structure mismatches...

Argument structure

- Most argument structure mismatches are banned under ellipsis; e.g. causative-inchoative alternations attempting to switch transitivity and agentivity (Sag 1976: 160, Johnson 2004: 7):

- (23) a. * Bill melted the copper, and the iron did as well. *int.* 'the iron melted'
b. * This can freeze. We really should. *int.* 'we should freeze it'

- Yet mismatches along similar lines can be found in advertising (McCloskey 2018: 8, ex. 13):

- (24) Paranormal Zone – making sense of things that don't.⁷ agentivity + transitivity
(25) Nokia – the phone that works where you do.⁸ agentivity only

- Also political sloganising (George W. Bush, 2002; Winkler 2018: ex. 42) and rhetorising:

(26) You disarm, or we will. transitivity only

(27) Isn't this undemocratic, sticking us with a dead-hand document that we can't change when the times do?⁹ agentivity + transitivity

- As previously, the very same mismatches are unacceptable outside that context:¹⁰

(28) * As a researcher, your job is to make sense of things that currently don't.

(29) * My phone provider is so useless – my mobile never works where I do.

(30) * As we made clear in the preliminary talks: if you don't disarm, we will.

(31) * If only it was easier to change the constitution as the times do.

Antecedent containment

(32) When do we punish people who don't?¹¹ *int.* '...people who don't punish people?'

- The elided VP *punish people* is dominated by its antecedent VP *punish people who don't*; i.e. Antecedent Contained Deletion (ACD) (Sag 1976):

(33) We reward people who you don't. *rel. on object*

- * [TP We [VP-A reward [DP people [RC who_i you don't [VP-A reward [DP people [RC who_i you don't [~~VP-E reward t_i~~]]]]]]]]]
- [DP people [RC who_i you don't [~~VP-E reward t_i~~]]] [TP We [VP-A reward t_j]]

(34) * We reward people who do. **rel. on subject*

- * [TP We [VP-A reward [DP people [RC who_i t_i do [VP-A reward [DP people [RC who_i t_i do [~~VP-E reward people~~]]]]]]]]]
- * [DP people [RC who_i t_i do [~~VP-E reward people~~]]] [TP We [VP-A reward t_j]] = (32)!¹²

Interim summary

Metalinguistic ellipsis can...

Recoverability	source antecedents from obscure places	
Ambiguity		
Argument structure	flout semantic and structural	How does metalinguistic ellipsis work?
Antecedent containment	identity conditions	
Adnominal antecedents	source antecedents from illicit places	

- Metalinguistic ellipsis flouts semantic and syntactic identity conditions to make something pithily and thoughtfully meaningful.
- Metalinguistic ellipsis can source antecedents from obscure (recoverability) and illicit places – adnominal antecedents next.

(Ad)nominal antecedents

- ‘VP’ ellipsis; but also PP, AP, DP predicates:

- (35)
- a. Jim has lectured on Crete, and Tim has, too.
 - b. Jim was on Crete, and Tim was, too.
 - c. Jim’s lectures were good, and Tim’s were, too.
 - d. Jim is a syntactician, and Tim is, too.

- Some category mismatches fine; e.g. nominals can serve as antecedents for ellipsis of VPs:

- (36) Meanwhile, they sense a drop in visitors to the city. (Hardt 1993: 35, ex. 118)
Those who do, they say, are taking cabs. *int.* ‘visit the city’

- (37) The candidate was dogged by charges of infidelity and avoiding the draft,
or at least trying to. *int.* ‘avoid the draft’ (Hardt 1993: 35, ex. 120)

- But (parts of) nominals cannot serve as antecedents for ellipsis of non-VP predicates – except in attention-grabbing contexts.¹³

DP-AP

(38) * Why did you buy those oranges when they weren't yet?

(39) * Chris ordered a bitter, then looked strangely disappointed when it was.

- But DP-AP in adverts and titles:¹⁴

(40) The Independent. It is. Are you?

(41) A routine that's anything but. (reviews, headlines *passim*)¹⁵

(42) Mt. Pleasant isn't. (Title of a 2005 song by 'The Evens')¹⁶

- But really, *DP-AP:

(43) * Have you tried reading the *Independent*? I generally find that it isn't.

(44) * A safe that's anything but is useless.

(45) * I went for a walk up Mt. Pleasant but it wasn't.

Referential-predicative

(46) The CCTV footage clearly showed three tall boys.

*So it was very surprising when the prime suspects weren't.

- But referential → predicative DP in article titles:¹⁷

(47) Binominal *each*: A DP that may not be.

(Title of Stowell 2013)

(48) Korean “case stacking” isn't.

(Title of Schütze 1996)

(49) School Shootings and the Heroes Who Shouldn't Be. (www.newyorker.com – 10 May 2019)

- But really, *referential → predicative:

(50) * Some linguists think DPs may not be.

(51) * Schütze argues persuasively that Korean case stacking isn't.

(52) * A: Respect our heroes! B: Sorry, I don't think they are.

Adnominal-predicative

- It may be possible for adnominal APs to provide antecedents for ellipsis of predicative APs. Hardt (1993: 36) offers this dialogue from TV's 'Streets of San Francisco':

(53) A: Could you tell us about the party held in your home last night, ma'am?

B: It was a very ordinary bash.

but Speaker A feels

A: What happened to one of your guests wasn't.

← to be cracking wise

- Adnominal → predicative AP mismatches in adverts and article titles:

(54) Everyday vehicles that aren't.

= (9)

(55) Bound VPs that need to be.

(Title of Haïk 1987)

- Sincere badness suggests *adnominal → predicative really:

(56) *John's everyday run isn't.

(cf. 16)

(57) *I disagree with Haïk that bound VPs that need to be.

- Also adnominal PP:

(58) The best seat in the house, isn't. (Visit IKEA to level up your garden)¹⁸

(59) *My garden is so great that the best seat in my house isn't.

Compounds

- It is not usually possible to source antecedents from within a compound noun; and yet:

(60) *At playgroup, kids should.

(61) (Pointing at a whiteboard:) *I still call this a blackboard, even though it's not.

(62) (Caption to a cartoon of a Viking ship striking shore:) *(Private Eye 1504, p. 40)*
I shall call this 'Greenland', as one day it will be.

- But really, *intra-compound antecedents: (though cf. Lipták tomorrow)

(63) *Greenland was so named by Erik the Red in an attempt to convince people that it was.

Nominal QUD-ability

- Ellipsis requires an identical antecedent; failing which, one can be accommodated in (the syntactic form of, Griffiths 2019b) a Question Under Discussion (Reich 2007, Barros 2014, Weir 2014) (QUD, Roberts 2012).
- Only At-Issue content can relate to the QUD (Simons et al. 2010, Tonhauser 2012); applied by Overfelt (resubmitted) to sprouted stripping.
- (The innards of) nominals are not syntactically identical to the elided predicate; nor are they At-Issue to the QUD – hence *.
- Cf. Hardt's examples: (Ccf. Johnson 2001 on deverbal nouns)

(64) They sense a drop in visitors to the city. Those who do are taking cabs. ≈ (36)

Q = What about those who still visit the city?

(65) The candidate was dogged by charges of avoiding the draft, or at least trying to.

Q = (Are the charges true?) Did the candidate really avoid the draft? ≈ (37)

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Argument structure	flout semantic and structural identity conditions	
Antecedent containment		
Adnominal antecedents	source antecedents from illicit places	
Contrast	not disobey contrast (in principle)	What can metalinguistic ellipsis not do?
Sluicing	nor affect sluicing (in practice?)	
Warner		
Double ellipsis		
Punning		What is metalinguistic ellipsis?
Language games	be compared to...	
Reduced Written Register		

Contrast

(Griffiths 2019a, Stockwell 2020, 2022)

- Predicate ellipsis requires contrast between the elliptical constituent and its antecedent.

- Positive vs. negative:

(66) Mt. Pleasant isn't. (= 42)

(67) Korean “case stacking” isn't. (= 48)

(68) Everyday vehicles that aren't. (= 9)

- *Just positive – despite the attention-grabbing intent:

(69) * Mt. Pleasant is.

(70) * Korean “case stacking” is.

(71) (Advertising a trendy hotel in Nevada:)

* Cool rooms that are.

(cf. in the Arctic:

Cool rooms that aren't.)

- Contrast is unfloutably fundamental to predicate ellipsis.

- Opposition between positive and negative effected by *but* in (72) rather than *not*; cf. (73):

(72) A routine that's anything but. (= 41)

(73) * Avoid routines that are.

- Contrasting intensionality – actual state of affairs vs. other possibilities or desires:

(74) Binominal *each*: A DP that may not be (= 47)

(75) School Shootings and the Heroes Who Shouldn't Be (= 49)

- Intensionality contrast alone sufficient:

(76) Bound VPs that need to be. (= 55)

Sluicing

- Why always predicate ellipsis? What about metalinguistic sluicing? Lame constructed attempts:

(77) (Guess the endorsing celebrity:)

??Sam's been talking. Do you know who? (contra Chung 2013, 'no new words')

(78) (Jack-in-the-box baby toy that opens via remote control:)

??It opens! And they won't ask who!

- Could be a principled gap.
- Or sluicing might simply not provide enough room to set up the mismatch; switches cued within TP – sentential negation, contrasting subjects, etc.
- Recall also the failed attempt at flouting scope (19) – may say more about scope ambiguity (already difficult) than metalinguistic ellipsis.

Warner effects

- Does contrast stand alone as unfloutable by metalinguistic ellipsis?
- ‘Warner’s Generalization’: while ellipsis doesn’t usually care about morphology (79), non-finite *BE* cannot be elided based off a finite antecedent (80) (Warner 1985, 1993, Potsdam 1997):

(79) John went to the shops yesterday, and Mary will <go to the shops> tomorrow.

(80) *I am confused about ellipsis, and today you will <be confused about ellipsis>, too!

- Hard to imagine (81) as an attempt at the title of a paper on Warner effects, or (82) in an advert:

(81) *Confused about ellipsis? I am. Now you will too!

(82) *They’re interested. Shouldn’t you?

- Contrast too broad; inflectional morphology too fiddly a glitch; fair game in between?

Summary of metalinguistic ellipsis

- Bend the rules to use the concision of ellipsis to cram two meanings into something pithy.
- Obscure or illicit antecedent location; flouting identity.
- Multiply metalinguistic – initial recoverability, lexical ambiguity, *DP-AP:¹⁹

(83) The Independent. It is. Are you?

- Clarifying conditions on ellipsis in the breach – (ad)nominal antecedents.
- Contrast and Warner are unfloutably fundamental.
- Remaining business: What is metalinguistic ellipsis?
- Cf. double ellipsis; punning on the homophony of ellipsis and in general; the relationship of metalinguistic ellipsis to language games and other register-specific phenomena.

Double ellipsis

- Adverts and aphorisms often feature two ellipses at once:

(84) (Tagline for Clariol hair dye:) Does she or doesn't she? (Schachter 1977)

(85) (A hedgehog wearing a hi-vis jacket:) If he could, he would. (road safety campaign)²⁰

(86) Whether you think you can, or think you can't – you're right. (attrib. Henry Ford)

- Despite recoverability from the non-linguistic scene or context, arguably not metalinguistic.
- Stockwell (2026) accommodates 'double ellipsis' as respecting identity, with each ellipsis serving as the antecedent for the other:

(87) (Context: Observing two people are at the top of a high diving board.)

a. You know what? I kind of think that he will if she does. (Jacobson 2022: ex. 19)

b. # You know what? I kind of think that he will. (cf. 2)

c. he will <jump> = she does <jump>

Punning

- The conditions on ellipsis are far from the only parts of language that can be flouted to attention-grabbing effect in the right context (88) – homophony (a), near-homophony (b), word boundaries (c), garden path parse (d), lexical/idiom ambiguity (e):

- (88)
- a. Nothing runs like a Deere
 - b. Dollar Shave Club: Shave Time, Shave Money
 - c. If you want to get ahead, get a hat!
 - d. Have You Met Life Today?
 - e. Deliveroo: Food – we get it

- But all of (88) (even arguably d) are phonological or lexical.
- Is metalinguistic ellipsis qualitatively different in punning on grammar rules themselves?

Punning on homophony around ellipsis

- Homophony with licensing Ts *can* and *did*:

(89) Carlsberg:²¹ Yes we  (cf. 6)

(90) (Guinness can cut into the shape of Ireland, captioned:) 'The Irish can'²²

(91) (Cartoon: man holding a newspaper with headline "Diddy found guilty on 2 charges")
Woman: Diddy?
Man: He did. (Private Eye magazine)

(92) I Did – Contractual relations. By David Sedaris.²³

Language games

- Does metalinguistic ellipsis constitute a language game, a.k.a. ‘ludling’?
- E.g. ‘Pig Latin’, *ig-pay atin-lay*, as evidence for phonotactics, syllable and metrical structure, acquirability, etc. (Bagemihl 1995, Vaux 2011 and references therein)
- E.g. Shm-reduplication, *baby* → *shmaby*; $\frac{1}{3}$ surveyed *broom* → *shmroom* (Vaux 2011: 737)
 - suggests $\int mr$ an accidental rather than systematic phonotactic gap for some speakers
- Phonology: adding rules and manipulations that respect the existing phonological structure.
- Cf. metalinguistic ellipsis: bending the rules on ellipsis themselves.

- The Doggo meme (Punske & Butler 2019) – a syntactic language game:²⁴

(93) i did u a flur a bring for mommers day! 'I brought you a flower for Mother's Day.'

- Undoing unergative $N \rightarrow V$ incorporation (94) and generalizing it to transitives (95):

(94) [v-do [_{NP} a dance]] $\rightarrow$ [v+dance_i [_{NP} t_i]]

(95) [v-do [_{IO} you] [_{DO} a flur] [_{NP} a bring]]

- Again cf. metalinguistic ellipsis: undoing and generalizing, but not breaking.

Reduced Written Register

- Metalinguistic ellipsis is register-specific: manipulations unacceptable outside of advertising/sloganising.
- Cf. Reduced Written Register English in diaries, recipes and headlines (Weir 2017)?
- Subject drop (Haegeman 1990 et seq.), object drop (Weir 2017, Massam & Roberge 1989, Haegeman 1987), and article drop (Stowell 1999):

(96) Ø_{subj} Received Ø_D credit card bill in Ø_D mail today. Ø_{subj} Will shred Ø_{obj} later.

- Register-specific: diary (96) vs. dialogue *(97):

(97) A: Have you heard anything from Mastercard?

B: *(I) received *(a) credit card bill in *(the) mail today. *(I) will shred *(it) later.

- But no discernible metalinguistic effect.²⁵
- Register-specific RWR is rule-governed rather than rule-breaking like metalinguistic ellipsis.

So what is metalinguistic ellipsis?

- Set double ellipsis aside.
- Punning on phonology or words – vs. on grammar rules themselves.
- Language games add to and generalise existing rules – vs. manipulating the conditions on ellipsis themselves.
- Reduced Written Register conforms to a register-specific grammar – vs. breaking the rules for metalinguistic effect.

Notes

¹Ellipsis does not always require a linguistic antecedent. For a comprehensive list of apparently lexicalised exceptions, including those in (98), see Miller & Pullum (2013: 5, ex. 7):

- (98) a. Shall we?
b. Don't!

Still, Miller & Pullum (2013) argue that antecedent-less ellipsis is not limited to fixed idioms. Rather, such 'exophoric' verb phrase ellipsis is reasonably productive in circumstances of permission, directives, and explicitly stated alternatives. None of these circumstances characterise the examples that follow in this section; though on the last of them, see 'Double ellipsis' below.

²Among many other optometrists.

³Google-able in records of radio adverts.

⁴On the second ellipsis in (15), see e.g. Fodor & Smith (1978), Stockwell & Schütze (2019).

⁵<https://www.vml.com/work/made-a-little-better>

⁶Observed by Michelle Sheehan on Facebook; cf. e.g.:

<https://broadbandinternetuk.com/blog/3639/sky-comondemand>

⁷Cf. <https://yourbestlifeafter50.com/tag/making-sense-of-things-that-dont/>

⁸Cf. e.g. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/565061084502687392/>. This particular mismatch involving *work* is strikingly popular, per the further examples from advertising and political sloganising in (99, <https://www.oarsandalps.com/pages/about-us>) and (100, <https://www.latest.facebook.com/UCSBGSA/posts/2857977984261230>):

(99) We've engineered, tested and re-engineered products that work as hard as you do.

(100) The University of California only works because we do.

⁹<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/09/30/constitution-book-reviews-chemerinsky-pierson-schickler>

¹⁰Similarly for (101, <https://doi.org/10.1609/aimag.v3i4.376>, observed by Chris Collins on Facebook) in (102):

(101) Why People Think Computers Can't.

transitivity only

(102) * For philosophical reasons, I think computers can't.

Unlike with (32) in the next section, antecedent containment can be resolved by covert movement of *think*'s CP complement, leaving the transitivity mismatch as the only issue in (101).

¹¹<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2019.104040> – observed by Carson Schütze.

¹²A sincere attempt at (32) fails:

(103) * We must punish people who don't!

¹³Aside from (40) and (62), the attested metalinguistic examples to follow in this section would fall to a constraint against ellipsis finding an antecedent within the subject of its clause. A constraint to this effect was proposed by Wasow (1972: 92) based on examples like (104):

- (104) a. * A proof that God exists does. (Wasow 1972: 93, ex. 16a)
b. * Your proof that my proof is valid isn't. (Kennedy 2004: ex. 1b)

However, Kennedy (2004) reaches the conclusion – contra Kennedy (1994) – that examples like (104) are not in fact ill-formed. Rather, ellipsis with subject-contained antecedents can reach decent levels of interpretability or felicity, as massaged in (105) by subordinate clause embedding in (a) and by the addition of an additive particle in (b):

- (105) a. ? History suggests that a proof that God exists never will. (Kennedy 2004: ex. 20a)
b. ? Your proof that my proof is valid is as well. (Kennedy 2004: ex. 17b)

¹⁴Beyond the usual contexts, (106) comes from a short story quoting from a fictional children's story; but it is surely metalinguistic (cf. 42, 45):

- (106) She calls you sweetie but she is not.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/09/30/ambrose-fiction-allegria-goodman>

¹⁵<https://www.dallasobserver.com/arts/a-routine-thats-anything-but-6427438>

<https://comicvine.gamespot.com/reviews/alex-ada-6/1900-3014/>

<https://www.realestatelicensetraining.com/what-does-a-real-estate-agent-do/>

¹⁶<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EKIOeg-I1M> – observed by Matthew Tyler on Facebook.

¹⁷Lurking in (47)-(49) are parses with main verb *BE* meaning 'exists'. Since these parses do not involve ellipsis, they are not at issue here. Such parses may (intentionally) outcompete the elliptical ones in the google-able book titles in (107) (Stockwell 2020: 204):

- (107) a. The Tiger That Isn't
b. The World That Isn't

¹⁸https://www.linkedin.com/posts/jamesrobinsonhellostarling_make-it-make-sense-i-spotted-this-ikea-activity-

¹⁹Other repeated examples: (4-5, 10) and (9, 54).

²⁰Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure ‘Share the Road to Zero’ campaign:
<https://www.facebook.com/ShareTheRoadToZero/posts/if-he-could-he-wouldbe-safe-be-seenroadwiseup/1332317108926331/>

²¹<https://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/yes-we-can>

²²<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C9j4rPDNEPH/>

²³<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2026/04/20/why-i-wanted-to-keep-my-marriage-a-secret>

²⁴Punske & Butler (2019) on the Doggo meme is the sole syntactic analysis of a language game that I’m aware of. Cf. Brook & Blamire (2023) for morphology.

²⁵This despite Weir’s (2017) analysis of object drop as involving ellipsis; specifically, noun phrase ellipsis in concert with article drop, following Tomioka (2003) for Japanese.

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