

**Tel-Aviv University  
The School of Philosophy, Linguistics and Science Studies  
Department of Linguistics**

**THURSDAY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM**

**Thursday 13.5.2021  
16:15-17:45**

**Richard Stockwell  
Oxford University**

**Contrast and Verb Phrase Ellipsis: Triviality, Symmetry, and Competition**

This talk, based on my recent UCLA dissertation, argues that contrast is crucial to verb phrase ellipsis (VPE). The contrast requirement comes to light from studying the interaction of VPE with triviality, symmetry, and competition. In some trivial sentences (1), VPE is ungrammatical for lack of contrast. With symmetrical predicates (2), symmetry creates semantic identity that overcomes mismatching form, but can also lead to contrast failures. And in MaxElide effects (3) (Schuyler 2001, Merchant 2008), contrast (cf. Griffiths 2019) offers a more promising account for the ungrammaticality of VPE than competition from sluicing:

- (1) If John is wrong, he is \*(wrong).
- (2) John wanted to dance with Mary, but she didn't want to (dance with him).
- (3) John should eat something, but I don't know what (\*he should).

Click [here](#) to see the colloquium program for the Spring semester

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