This project presents novel English sluicing data that cannot be captured under existing semantic and pragmatic theories of sluicing. The data embody a previously unobserved phenomenon in which the elided content and the antecedent content in a sluiced construction contain opposite polarity. The data challenge current accounts of identity conditions on ellipsis by demonstrating that a greater mismatch between antecedent and elided content is possible than has previously been thought. This project provides corpus and constructed polarity-reversal examples and presents a new sluicing analysis accounting for and uniting the data.

Sluicing, first noted by Ross (1969), is an ellipsis phenomenon in which the TP of an interrogative is elided, stranding an overt wh-phrase in the CP domain. The dominant semantics-based theory of sluicing is Merchant's (2001) theory of e-GIVENness. e-GIVENness imposes a bidirectional entailment identity condition on ellipsis; simplified, a TP can be elided if and only if it entails and is entailed by a salient antecedent TP. I show that the bidirectional entailment condition incorrectly predicts the polarity reversal data to be impossible. (1) is a polarity reversal example in which negation is present in the ellipsis site (subscripted E), but absent in the antecedent site (subscripted A). Strikethrough material signifies elided content.

(1) [I don't think that [TP Trump will comply with the debate requirements]_{E}, but I don't know why [TP he won't comply with the debate requirements]_{E}.

e-GIVENness requires mutual semantic entailment between A and E; however, it is clear that neither TP in (1) semantically entails the other. A move to include the matrix negation in the antecedent by taking the entire matrix clause A' as antecedent also fails on its two available readings. Interpreting negation in its surface position fails to deliver A'/E entailment, as the speaker's lacking a belief that Trump will comply does not semantically entail him not complying. Interpreting negation in the embedded clause A—the neg-raised and only felicitous reading of (1) (Horn 1971)—also fails to deliver A'/E entailment, as the speaker's thinking that Trump won't comply does not semantically entail that he won't, since the speaker can have false beliefs.

I account for the neg-raised reading of A' in (1) with the excluded middle presupposition that Gajewski (2007) proposes is conventionally associated with neg-raising verbs. However, corpus example (2) shows that the phenomenon is robust beyond neg-raising constructions. The inference from A to E in (2) is a pragmatic entailment that ¬\(\text{remember } p \rightarrow \neg p\). No semantic entailment exists between a speaker not remembering an event and the event having not occurred, as the following utterance is perfectly felicitous: I don't remember being scared, but apparently I was!

(2) Context: On the day the Japanese invaded Pearl Harbor, Hummel was rounded up and locked in an internment camp along with about 2,000 other foreigners.

Sluice: “I don't know why [I wasn't scared]_{E}, but [I really cannot remember being scared]_{A},” [Hummel] said. “It all seemed like great fun.”

Examples (1) and (2) demonstrate that the interpretation of the silence in sluiced constructions can rely crucially on pragmatically-enriched content. Therefore, the identity condition proposed to hold between the antecedent and elided content must allow for the pragmatic enrichment of semantic content. I propose that the correct identity relationship needed for sluicing is contextual entailment. Informally, a TP can be elided iff it expresses a proposition that is entailed by the local context (c_L) and is uniquely salient. Formally:

**Sluicing Condition:** A TP α can be deleted iff \(\text{ExClo}(\left[\alpha\right]^{g})\) expresses a proposition \(p\), such that \(c_L \subseteq p\) and \(p\) is uniquely salient.

Polarity reversals under sluicing present a new challenge to the program of determining the conditions under which linguistic content can be felicitously elided. I show that, counter to previous theories, a complete analysis of sluicing must account for the role of pragmatics in licensing the ellipsis of a proposition.