

Remarks on the Exponential Rules in Linear Logic

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We work in linear logic with weakening and consider the standard exponential rules

$$\frac{\Gamma, !A, !A \Rightarrow \Delta}{\Gamma, !A \Rightarrow \Delta} \text{ (!c)} \quad \frac{\Gamma, A \Rightarrow \Delta}{\Gamma, !A \Rightarrow \Delta} \text{ (!d)} \quad \frac{! \Gamma \Rightarrow A}{! \Gamma \Rightarrow !A} \text{ (!R)}$$

The rules (!c) and (!d) say that contraction is applicable to formulas prefixed with ! (‘bang’). In the intuitive interpretation of formulas as resources, !A thus denotes a resource which can be used arbitrarily often.

In the same spirit, the *soundness* of the rule (!R) is sometimes argued for as follows: If we can obtain the resource A from resources $! \Gamma$, then we can repeat this ‘process’ to obtain arbitrarily many A ’s, since we never run out of the unbounded resources in $! \Gamma$.

Since the resource interpretation of linear logic is not formalized, no direct argument for the *completeness* of the rule (!R) can be made. In fact, some derivations seem to conflict with the interpretation of !A as ‘arbitrarily many’. For example, we can prove

$$C, !(C \rightarrow A \otimes C) \Rightarrow \underbrace{A \otimes \dots \otimes A}_n$$

for every n , but we cannot prove

$$C, !(C \rightarrow A \otimes C) \Rightarrow !A$$

It is thus not clear which notion of ‘arbitrarily many’ is captured by the rule (!R). We try to gain some insight into this problem by comparing (!R) to a naive infinitary rule of the form

$$\frac{\Gamma \Rightarrow A \quad \Gamma \Rightarrow A \otimes A \quad \Gamma \Rightarrow A \otimes A \otimes A \quad \dots}{\Gamma \Rightarrow !A}$$