

"There's less to words than meets the eye"

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Elided VPs in English and their antecedent VPs can mismatch in voice, with passive VPs being elided under apparent identity with active antecedent VPs, and vice versa (as in "This system can be used by anyone who wants to"). Such voice mismatches are not allowed in any other kind of ellipsis, such as sluicing and other clausal ellipses. These latter facts indicate that the identity relation in ellipsis is sensitive to syntactic form, not merely to semantic form. The VP-ellipsis facts fall into place if the head that determines voice is external to the phrase being elided, here argued to be vP; such an account, I argue, can only be framed in approaches that allow for the separation of syntactic features from the heads on which they are morphologically realized. In other words, strict lexicalism or "WYSIWYG" syntax can't be right.