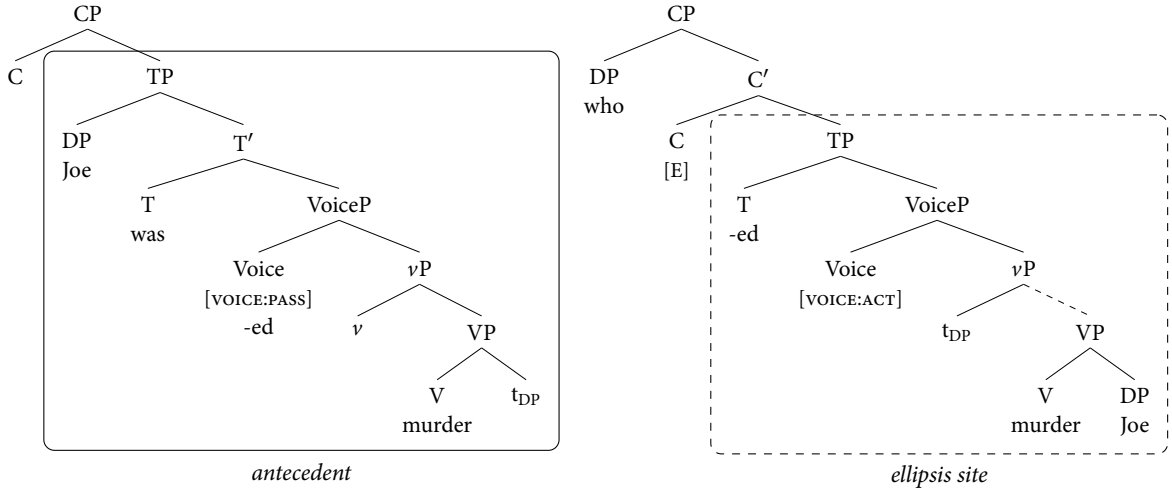
**Voice mismatches beyond passives: Sluicing with active impersonal antecedents**

Voice mismatches are tolerated by VPE (1a), but not sluicing (1b) (Hardt 1993; Kehler 2002; Merchant 2013).

(1) a. The system can be used$_{\text{PASS}}$ by anyone who wants to [$_{\text{VP}}$ ⟨use$_{\text{ACT}}$ it⟩ ] ($A_{\text{PASS}}$, $E_{\text{ACT}}$)
b. *Joe was murdered$_{\text{PASS}}$, but we don't know who [$_{\text{TP}}$ ⟨murdered$_{\text{ACT}}$ Joe⟩ ] ($A_{\text{PASS}}$, $E_{\text{ACT}}$)

Merchant's (2013) explanation of this is based on the assumption that voice features contained in the ellipsis site and antecedent must match. In VPE (1a), the ellipsis site does not contain VoiceP, therefore respecting the identity condition. Since sluicing elides a larger constituent (TP), it necessarily contains VoiceP and thereby does not permit a mismatch in voice features, i.e. passive in the antecedent and active in the ellipsis site (2).

(2)




**Active impersonals**: Many languages have a passive-like construction known as an impersonal (e.g. Blevins 2005; Legate 2014). In Polish, impersonals show the *-n/-t* suffix and neuter singular agreement (3b). In Irish, these impersonal constructions are referred to as 'autonomous' forms and are glossed accordingly (4).

(3) a. (Ludzie) przy-nos-il-i pacjent-om kwiat-y
people.NOM PFX-bring-L-M.PL patient-DAT.PL flower-ACC.PL
'People/they brought flowers to the patients.'
b. Przy-nosz-on-o pacjent-om kwiat-y
PFX-bring-IMPERS-N.SG patients-DAT.PL flowers-ACC.PL
'Flowers were brought to the patients (by some people).' (Polish; Ruda 2014:204)

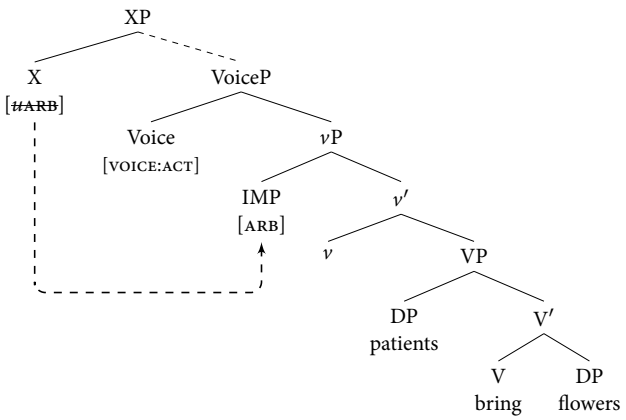
(4) a. Scaoil-eadh amach na líonta
release-PST.AUT out the nets
'The nets were let out.'
b. Tóg-adh suas an corpán ar bharr na haille
raise-PST.AUT up the body on top the cliff.GEN
'The body was lifted to the top of the cliff.' (McCloskey 2007: 827)

While these constructions may resemble passives in that they lack an overt external argument, it has been shown that they actually have an active syntax with a silent impersonal pronoun as an external argument, which acts as the grammatical subject. For example, the agent of a passive can be expressed as a *by*-phrase, but not in an impersonal. A revealing contrast from Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir (2002:103f.) shows that the implicit agent of a passive cannot license secondary predication (5a), whereas the external argument of an impersonal can (5b). Both in Polish and Irish, the impersonal subject can participate in control and bind reflexive/reciprocal pronouns (e.g. Lavine 2005). The conclusion that has been drawn from this is that impersonals differ from passives in having an

(5) a. Jan$_i$ był obrabowany [ PRO$_{i/*j}$ po pijanemu ]
Jan.NOM was robbed.PASS while drunk
'Jan$_i$ was robbed drunk$_{i/*j}$
b. Jan-a$_j$ obrabowano IMP$_i$ [ PRO$_{i/*j}$ po pijanemu ]
Jan-ACC robbed.IMPERS while drunk
'Jan$_i$ was robbed drunk$_{j/*i}$.'

active syntax with an fully projected, albeit null, external argument as the subject. This analysis is sketched in (6). Following McCloskey (2007), the impersonal pronoun is licensed under Agree with a higher, which is realized as the dedicated impersonal morphology. If this is the correct characterization of impersonal constructions, then sluicing with active impersonal antecedents should not lead to a voice mismatch since the specification of Voice would be active as in (6). However, this prediction is not borne out, as (7) and (8) show.

(6)




(7) a. *Wczoraj przy-niesi-on-o pacjentom kwiaty ale nie wiedziałam, kto [TP △ ]
yesterday PFX-bring-IMPERS-N.SG patients flowers but NEG know.1SG who.NOM
'Flowers were brought to the patients yesterday (by some people), but we don't know who.'

b. *Scaoil-eadh amach na lonta, ach níl fhios agam cé [TP △ ]
release-PST.AUT out the nets but not.is knowledge at.me who
'The nets were let out, but we don't know who.'

The question now is why impersonals do not license active sluices, despite clearly having active voice.
**Properties of IMP?**: One possible explanation is that it is some property of the impersonal pronoun that does not meet the identity condition on sluicing. For example, impersonals often have a generic interpretation. If the subject position is quantified over by a Gen operator, for example, this could lead to a lack of mutual entailment viz. the ellipsis site (Merchant 2001). However, generic readings can be quite easily controlled for and appear to be absent in (7). Next to generic readings, overt impersonals such as *man* in German allow for existential interpretations (Fenger 2018). However, (8) shows that existential *man* cannot antecede a sluice.

(8) Gestern hat man für dich angerufen (*aber ich weiß nicht mehr wer [TP △ ])
yesterday has IMP for you called but I know not anymore who.NOM
'Someone called for you yesterday (but I don't know who).'

Instead, one could assume that the impersonal pronoun, despite being indefinite, is somehow not sufficient to act as correlate (cf. *Antecedent Correlate Harmony*; Dayal & Schwarzschild 2010; Barros 2013). This could be traced to a featural difference. Lavine (2005) argues that the impersonal agent has masculine plural features as these surface on adjectival predicates (9). However, this cannot be the problem, since *kto* ('who') can refer back to M.PL antecedents.

(9) Wyglądano na szczęśliwych
looked.IMPERS on happy.ACC.M.PL
'They looked happy.'

(10) Niektórz-y pracownic-y dostali już wypłatę, ale nie wiem dokładnie kto [TP △ ]
some-M.PL employee-M.PL got already payment but NEG know.1SG exactly who.NOM
'Some of the employees were already paid, but I don't know who.'

**Syntactic identity**: An alternative follows from Merchant's (2013) explanation of impossible argument structure alternations such as *This can freeze. *Please do ⟨freeze this⟩*. Here, the antecedent is an unaccusative verb, while the elided verb is transitive. Despite both being specified for active voice, this an (anti-)causativity mismatch is not tolerated. Merchant (2013) argues that a mismatch in types of *v* ($v_{unacc}$ vs. $v_{trans}$) is not possible:

(11) a. [TP This$_1$ [T′ can [VoiceP Voice$_{[VOICE:ACT]}$ [vP $v_{unacc}$ [VP freeze t$_1$ ]]]]]
b. *Please [TP do [VoiceP Voice$_{[VOICE:ACT,\ E]}$ ⟨ [vP DP [v′ $v_{trans}$ [VP freeze this ]]] ⟩ ]]

We can extend this to impersonals if we assume that they are licensed/selected by a special $v_{imp}$ head (12).
(12) [VoiceP Voice$_{[VOICE:ACT]}$ [vP IMP [v′ $v_{imp}$ [VP V DP ]]]] This means that, given syntactic identity, the Voice heads will match, but the *v* heads will not. This follows from Merchant's explanation about argument structure alternations under ellipsis, however it is incompatible with an analysis of impersonal pronouns as licensed under Agree with a higher functional head (e.g. McCloskey 2007, Legate et al. 2017), as in (6).