The At-Issue/Not-At-Issue Divide
Sentence content can be divided into what is:
• at-issue (the primary assertion), and
• not-at-issue (secondary entailments/presuppositions).

At-issue and not-at-issue content show limited interaction (Stalnaker, 1978) and are thought to represent separate dimensions of meaning (Potts, 2005).

Not-at-issue: John believed that the demo tape that promoted the rock singer was very successful in America in the 1990s.

At-issue: Relative clause attributed to John's beliefs.

Research Question: How does the at-issue/not-at-issue divide operate during real-time sentence processing?

Pushed Aside
The limited interaction between at-issue and not-at-issue content also extends to perceived syntactic complexity (Dillon, Clifton, & Frazier, 2014).

• Acceptability of an at-issue is lower when interrupted by a lengthened at-issue relative clause, but not when interrupted by a lengthened not-at-issue appositive clause.

Hypothesis: Not-at-issue content is "pushed aside" and processed separately from at-issue content.

• Perhaps in a separate memory store (Redeker, 2006).

Interference Effects
Interference arises during memory retrieval when structurally illicit items bare similar retrieval cues.

Agreement Attraction
Reading from subject-verb disagreement is eased when a plural noun phrase intervenes (Wagers, Lau, & Phillips, 2009).

• The demo tape that promoted the rock singer(s) was very successful in America in the 1990s.

Illusory NPI Licensing
Reading from an unlicensed NPI is eased when a potential licensor ("no") is available in an unlicensed position (Xiang, Grove, & Giannakidou, 2013).

• The authors that no/the critics recommended have ever received acknowledgement for a best selling novel.

Hypothesis: Interference effects only arise when the retrieval cue and the interfering element are in the same memory store.

Hypothesis & Methods
Main Hypothesis: If not-at-issue content is processed in a separate memory store, then interference at issue retrieval cues should be blocked.

Design:
• 48 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk.
• Phrase-by-phrase self-paced serial visual presentation.

Agreement Attraction: 2 (Relative vs. Appositive Clause) x 2 (Singular vs. Plural Attractor) x 2 (Singular vs. Plural Verb); 40 items.

1. a. The demo tape that promoted the rock singer(s) was very successful in America in the 1990s.
2. b. The demo tape that promoted the rock singer(s) was very successful in America in the 1990s.

Illusory NPI Licensing: 2 (Relative vs. Appositive Clause) x 2 (Matrix vs. Embedded licensor); 24 items (Parker & Phillips, 2016).

1. a. The/No author that no/the critics recommended have ever received acknowledgement for a best selling novel.
2. b. The/No authors that no/the critics recommended have ever received acknowledgement for a best selling novel.

Summary & Conclusion
Agreement attraction was virtually eliminated from not-at-issue appositives (0.45 msec) compared to at-issue relatives (28.76 msec).

• This supports a "pushed aside" separate memory store theory for not-at-issue content.

Illusory licensing of NPIs was the same for both not-at-issue appositives (30.58 msec) and at-issue relatives (31.30 msec).

• This suggests that negative implicatures triggered inside not-at-issue content can affect at-issue content (Xiang, Grove, & Giannakidou, 2013).

Conclusion
There is processing divide between at-issue and not-at-issue content that may be bridged in pragmatically principled ways (AnderBois, Brasoveanu, & Henderson, 2011).

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