SUMMARY: We observe a new reading (the sticky reading) of pronouns in VP ellipsis, which is distinct from the strict and sloppy readings. This reading is problematic for standard theories of VPE, which are tailored to force parallel binding. We sketch an alternative theory based on a question-based model of information structure.

Strict, Sloppy, and Sticky Readings
Pronouns under VPE famously give rise to Strict and Sloppy readings (Sag, 1976). Either both pronouns are interpreted as free, or both pronouns are interpreted as bound. Mixed readings are disallowed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strict</th>
<th>Sloppy</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) [Each of the boys in John’s class] cites his paper.

Toni didn’t cite his paper.

*Mixed 1: x J

*Mixed 2: J T

Existing theories of VPE are set-up to enforce binding parallelism, either via a semantic condition (Rooth, 1992), or a syntactic condition (Sag, 1976; Fiengo & May, 1994). What we dub the Sticky Reading, which is a special kind of mixed reading, is an exception to the generalisation that VPE must involve parallel binding.

(2) [None of the authors] proofread his paper.

So the editor did [proofread them] (instead). (them = the authors’ papers)

The Identity Condition
We formulate our identity condition in terms of the Question under Discussion (Roberts 2012), which is a special kind of mixed reading, as an exception to the generalisation that VPE must involve parallel binding.

- **Focus Condition**: The focus value of E-Cl, (A-Cl)[f], entails that of A-Cl, [A-Cl][f].
- **Discourse Condition**: E-Cl is discourse dependent on A-Cl.

The Focus Condition
One crucial difference between the sticky reading and other mixed readings is that under the sticky reading, the two sentences are about the same set of objects. The focus condition captures this notion. Identifying focus values of sentences as questions, we define entailment for focus values as (non-contextual) question entailment.

Since (3) does not entail (6), the focus condition is not met. Generally, under strict and sloppy readings, [E-Cl][f] = [A-Cl][f], thus the focus condition holds. Under (unavailable) mixed readings, the entailment does not hold.

The Discourse Condition
VPE is known to be sensitive to discourse relations between A-Cl and E-Cl (Hardt & Romero 2004, Kehler 2002, Kehler & Büring 2008).

(7) Agnes arrived after John ate.

But Bill didn’t *(eat / arrive after John ate)*

(11) Q: [Which of the authors] proofread his paper?

A: #The editor did [proofread them].

On the other hand, the sticky reading is available in questions, because QACC does not apply to such a pair.

(12) A: [None of the authors] proofread his paper.

Q: Then who did [proofread them]?

Alternative Account: Telescoping?
Dalrymple et al. (1991) suggest that one interpretation of (13) corresponds to the universal quantifier taking extra-sentential scope and binding a singular pronoun in both A-Cl and E-Cl, (telescoping; Poesio and Zucchi, 1992, Keshet, 2008).

(13) [Every author] [t, proofread his paper, and then Bill did [proofread his paper]].

Under this analysis (13) involves parallel binding. But this telescoping analysis fails to generalise to other cases of sticky readings.

1. Incorrect truth conditions with negative quantifiers:

(14) [None of the authors] [t, proofread his paper.

So the editor did [proofread his paper].

(16) [None of the authors] proofread his paper.

In that case, the editor mustn’t have *(proofread his paper)*/(proofread them).

2. Scope Islands: A universal quantifier cannot scope out of an embedded finite clause; telescoping is blocked, but the sticky reading is still there.

(15) John told me that [every author]* proofread his paper.

However, in this case, the editor mustn’t have *(proofread his, paper)*/(proofread them).

3. Collectivity: The telescoping analysis only generates the distributive reading.

(16) [None of the authors] proofread his paper.

So three sub-editors had to [proofread his paper]/(proofread them) instead.

a. DISTRIBUTIVE: Each of the sub-editors proofread all the papers.

b. COLLECTIVE/CUMULATIVE: Each sub-editor proofread a subset of the papers, and all the papers were proofread by some sub-editor.

4. Discourse conditions on telescoping: Keshet (2008) observes that telescoping is unavailable in certain discourse configurations, e.g. the explanation relation:

(17) #Each of my friends is dishonest. Because he’s a politician.

The sticky reading is available in such cases.

(18) Each of the authors didn’t proofread his paper. Because the editor did.

References: