

Focus/*wh*-association in RD

- RD in Cantonese, Mandarin, and Japanese allows for a peculiar “leftward” association of ‘only/the-hell’ (first observed by Cheung 1997 for Cantonese; cf. Cheung 2009)

(1) [Aaming zungji \_ *nibun syu<sub>F</sub>* zaa3] *zinghai*. [CC]  
Ming like this book SFP only  
'Ming only likes *this book*.'

(2) [\_ *Shei* hui lai a] *daodi*? [MC]  
who will come SFP the.hell  
'Who the hell will come?'

(3) *Dare*-ga ki-ta n-da, *ittai*? [JP]  
who-NOM come-PST NMLZ-COP the.hell  
'Who the hell came?'  
□ Note that RD in the three languages are often gapped, and both arguments and adjuncts can undergo RD (Tanaka 2001, Cheung 2009, Yip 2024)

- ‘Only/the-hell’ has a particular c-command requirement of focus/*wh*-association

(4) ‘Only’/‘the-hell’ expressions must c-command the **pronounced** copy of their focus/*wh*-associate.

- Movement and ellipsis/slucing in RD cannot satisfy (4)

\*[<sub>main</sub> ... focus/*wh* ... ] SFP [<sub>RD</sub> ... ‘only’/‘the hell’ ... <focus/*wh*> ... ]  
↑ no c-command      ↑ c-command

## Not movement

- Prominent approach to RD: Monoclausal movement (Cheung 1997, 2009; Law 2003, Chiang 2017, Lee 2017, 2021; Wei & Li 2018, *i.a.*)

[CP Δ SFP [ Δ... [TP ‘only/the-hell’...focus/*wh* ] ]]]

- However, focus **cannot** move out of *only*’s scope

(Jackendoff 1972; Tancredi 1990; Erlewine 2014, *i.a.*)

- The same is true for ‘the-hell’ expressions (Huang & Ochi 2004)
- Including topicalization, relativization, focus movement (A’); raising and passivation (A-mvt)
- Although they allow for vanilla reconstruction (for quantifiers & anaphors; Y.-h. A. Li 2000; Law and Pan 2023; Yip & Ahenkorah 2023)

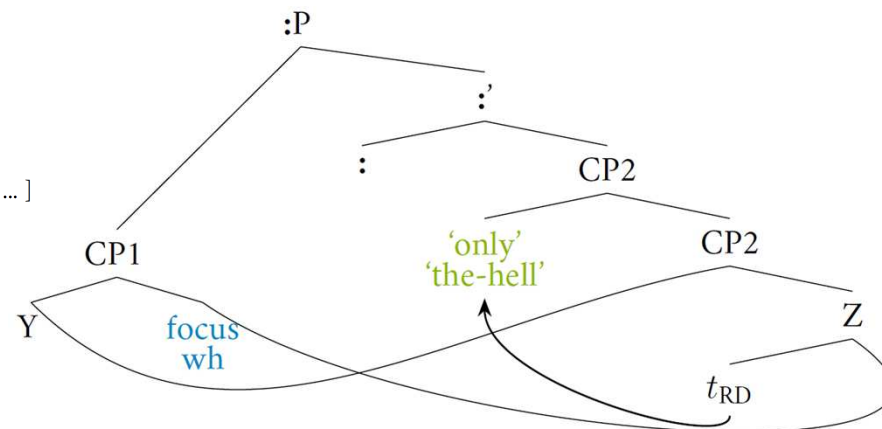
(5) \**Ni zek gau<sub>F</sub>*, Aaming *zinghai* m-zungji \_ aa3. [CC]  
this CL dog Ming only not-like \_ SFP  
Int.: ‘Ming only doesn’t like *this dog*.’

(6) \**Na zhi gou*, ZS *daodi* bu-xihuan \_ le? [MC]  
which CL dog ZS the.hell not-like \_ SFP  
Int.: ‘Which dog does ZS not like?’

[<sub>main</sub> ... focus/*wh* ... ] SFP [<sub>RD</sub> ‘only/the-hell’ ... ]

## What is the nature of the silence in RD?

- Movement? NO!
- Ellipsis? NO!
- Multidominance? YES!



## Beyond RD: Right-Node Raising

- RNR is analyzed with multidominance (Wilder 1999; Belk, Neeleman & Philip 2023; MC: Cheng 2009; *i.a.*)

- Focus association of ‘only’ is also possible, corroborating the multidominant analysis

(10) [Aaming *zinghai* zungji \_] ji [Aafan *zinghai* toujim *nibun syu<sub>F</sub>*] [CC]  
Ming only like but Fan only hate this book  
'Ming only likes, but Fan only hates, *this book*.'

- ‘Only’ in 1st-conjunct c-commands and associates with the pronounced object in 2nd-conjunct.

[‘only’ ... ] & [‘only’ ... focus]  
↑ c-command      ↑ c-command

- Also true in English – See Yip & Tamar-Mattis’s (2025 April) WCCFL talk!

→ A new diagnostic test for multidominance!

## RD as multidominance

- Adopting Citko (2005)’s **Parallel Merge** to RD:

(9) CP2 shares every node with CP1 except for the defocused element(s) that undergo(es) movement.

- Resemble “non-bulk sharing” structures in conjoined wh-questions (e.g., Gračanin-Yuksek 2007)

- Generates **correct c-command relations** to satisfy (4)

[<sub>main</sub> ... focus/*wh* ... ] SFP [<sub>RD</sub> ‘only’/‘the hell’ ]  
↑ c-command

- Wilder (1999)’s definition of c-command

- *Sharing*: α is shared by X and Y iff (i) neither of X and Y dominates the other, and (ii) both X and Y dominate α
- *Full dominance*: X fully dominates α iff X dominates α and X does not share α
- X c-commands α iff (i) X ≠ α, (ii) X does not fully dominate α, (iii) α does not dominate X, and (iv) all categories that dominate X dominate α.

## Not ellipsis/slucing

- Alternative approach to RD: Biclausal sluicing

(Tanaka 2001; Cheung 2015; Tang 2015, 2018; Yip 2024; cf. Ott & de Vries 2016)

[CP1 ...focus/*wh*...SFP][CP2 Δ [‘only/the-hell’...focus/*wh* ]]  
↑

- However, **only cannot** associate into ellipsis sites

(Beaver & Clark 2008; Bassi, Hirsch, & Trinh 2022; cf. Cheung 2009:213)

(7) Aaming *zinghai* wui maai *siusyut<sub>F</sub>*. [CC]  
Ming only will buy novel

\*Aafan dou *zinghai* wui *maai siusyut<sub>F</sub>*.  
Fan also only will  
'Ming will only buy novels. Fan as well.'

- The same is true for ‘the-hell’ expressions

- *Wh*-words may independently be elided in fragment questions which have a sluicing syntax (H. Li 2015; Wei 2018), but ellipsis fails with ‘the-hell’

(8) a. *Tà {mingtian/ daodi} qu na?* (Xuexiao.) [MC]  
3SG tomorrow/ the.hell go where school  
'Where will he go tomorrow?' 'School.'

b. *Na ni {mingtian/ \*daodi} qutu ne?*  
then 2SG tomorrow/ the.hell go where SFP  
'Where(\*the-hell) will you go (tmr)?'