Defending a biclausal approach to right dislocation

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1 Introduction

Right dislocation (henceforth RD) refers to the phenomenon that some elements are displaced or "copied" to the right of a sentence, commonly found in colloquial speech.

(1) a. He's real smart, **John**.

b. He's real smart, **John is**. (Kayne 1994:78)

In Chinese (including Cantonese and Mandarin), when sentence-final particles (SFPs) are present, the displaced/copied elements must follow the SFPs (Cheung 2009, 2015). RD may be gapped or gapless.

(2) $\overbrace{[\ \ldots\ (\mathrm{XP}_i)\ \ldots\ \mathrm{SFP}\ ]}^{\textit{main chunk}}\ \overbrace{\mathrm{XP}_i}^{\textit{RD chunk}}$

(3) Gapped right dislocation (GRD)

a. [_ heoi-zo Meigwok laa3] **Aaming**. [C(antonese)]

b. [_ qu-le Meiguo le] **Xiaoming**. [M(andarin)]

go-PFV US SFP Ming

'Ming went to the US.'

(4) Dislocation copying (DC)

a. [**Aaming** heoi-zo Meigwok laa3] **Aaming**! [C]

b. [**Xiaoming** qu-le Meiguo le] **Xiaoming**! [M]

Ming go-PFV US SFP Ming

'Ming went to the US!'

(5) A typological note on gapped argumental RD (subject/object)

a. Languages that ***disallow*** null arguments also ***disallow*** argumental gaps in RD (e.g., Germanic languages like Dutch/German, Ott and de Vries 2016)

b. Languages that ***allow*** null arguments also ***allow*** argumental gaps in RD (e.g., Japanese: Tanaka 2001, Korean: Park and Kim 2009, *Chinese*)

What makes right dislocation interesting?

- Issues of linearization: apparent *rightward* movement ➜ inconsistent with the LCA (Kayne 1994)
  ← *biclausal* structure + some non-pronunciation/deletion? (e.g., Tanaka 2001; Ott and de Vries 2016, *i.a.*)
  ← *monoclausal* structure + *leftward* movement?
- The second line of research (monoclausal) opens up discussion in relation to a number of theoretical issues in Chinese and in general (e.g., (de)focus, linearization, head-directionality of SFPs; see Cheung 2009; T. T.-M. Lee 2017, 2021; Lai 2019)

- Today, I will show that a pursuit along the *first* line (***biclausal***) allows us to have:
  - A simpler yet empirically more adequate grammar of RD in Chinese
  - A better understanding on cross-linguistic variations in relation to empty categories

Two outstanding issues of Chinese RD

#1 Whether GRD and RD should receive a ***uniform*** treatment.

#2 Whether they are ***monoclausal*** or ***biclausal***.

- Currently unsettled in the generative literature, where GRD is usually treated as monoclausal (Cheung 2009; T. T.-M. Lee 2017, *i.a.*) and DC as biclausal (Cheung 2015; Tang 2018, *i.a.*)
- Despite the consensus on unification other frameworks (e.g., Shi 1992; Luke 2004)
- Recent *monoclausal* attempts of unification (Lai 2019; T. T.-M. Lee 2021)

Overview of the talk

- I argue that GRD and RD in Chinese have a ***unified biclausal structure***.
  - Novel arguments from imperfect copying and asymmetries between the main and RD chunks
  - The two clauses are coordinated and form **:**P (specifying coordination, after Ott and de Vries 2016)
  - The second clause involves movement and deletion (Cheung 2015)
- I propose that GRD only differs from DC in the use of ***empty categories*** in the first clause.
  - GRD is constrained by the availability of empty categories
  - Captures the cross-linguistic variations: certain GRD variants are permitted only in Chinese due to the independently available empty categories, which are not available in some other languages

(6) $[_{:P}\ [_{\text{main}}\ \ldots\ \{e_i\ /\ \text{XP}_i\}\ \ldots\ \text{SFP}\ ]\ [_{:'}\ \mathbf{:}\ [_{\text{RD}}\ \text{XP}_i\ \ [\ \ldots\ t_{\text{XP}}\ \ldots\ ]\ ]]]]$

(e = empty category, shaded = non-pronunciation)

- **Road map**

§2: Basic properties of RD (handout only)

§3: The monoclausal vs. biclausal debate

§4: Novel arguments for a biclausal structure

§5: Empty categories in GRD

§6: Conclusion

3 The monoclausal vs. biclausal debate

- Previous proposals of Chinese RD disagree on the assumed clausal structure: *monoclausal* vs. *biclausal*

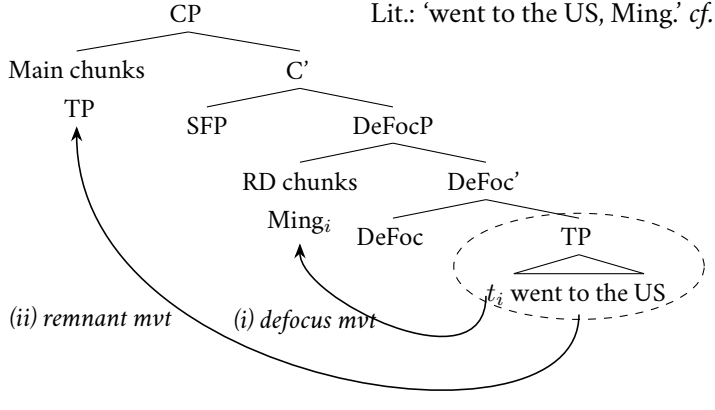
➜ The **derivation relationship** between main & RD chunks (*movement* vs. *juxtaposition/coordination*)
← Today's focus

➜ The nature of the non-pronunciation in RD chunks (*trace/Copy Deletion* vs. *ellipsis*)

Monoclausal approach

(Packard 1986; Siu 1986; Cheung 1997, 2005, 2009; Law 2003; Chiang 2017, 2022; T. T.-M. Lee 2017, 2021, 2023; Wei and Li 2018; Lai 2019; Yip 2020)

(15) The monoclasual + movement approach to RD (adopted from T. T.-M. Lee 2017)



T. T.-M. Lee 2017's analysis (coupled with T. T.-M. Lee 2021) is chosen since it has the maximal derivative power, but the counter-arguments presented today apply to all variants of the monoclausal approach.

Biclausal approach

(Cheung 2015; Tang 2015a, 2018; Chan 2016; Chen 2016; Yip 2024)

- I advocate for the following biclausal structure (inspired by Cheung 2015; Ott and de Vries 2016)[1]

(16) The uniform biclausal syntax of right dislocation

a. **Empty categories**: The apparent gaps in the main chunks (CP1) are empty categories.

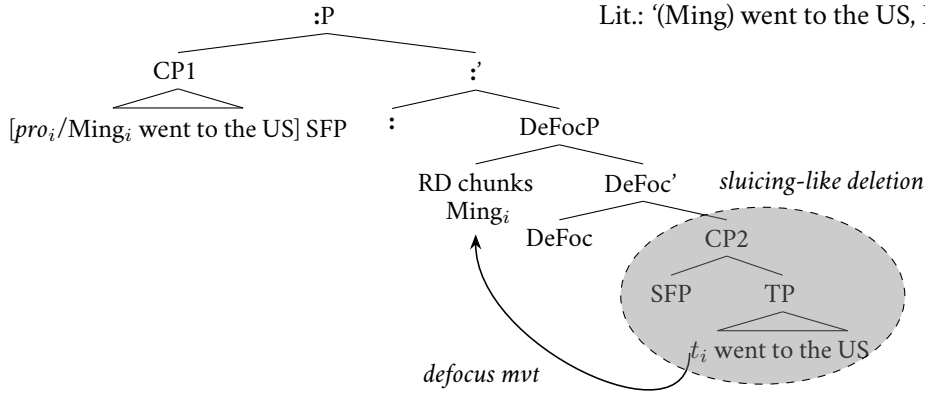
b. **Defocus movement**: The pronounced elements in the RD chunks undergo defocus movement to DeFocP (above CP2), leaving a remnant CP2.

c. **Non-pronunciation**: The remnant CP2 is not pronounced.

d. **Coordination**: CP1 and DeFocP are coordinated by a specifying conjunction **:**.

(17) The biclausal + sluicing approach to RD

Lit.: '(Ming) went to the US, Ming.' *cf.* (3)-(4)



4 Novel arguments for a biclausal structure

I present three novel arguments for a biclausal analysis and against a monoclausal analysis. The completing structures are represented below:

(18) a. $[_{CP}\ [_{TP}\ t_{XP}\ YP\ ]\ [SFP\ [XP_{RD}\ ...\ t_{TP}]\ ]]$ Monoclausal: *(XP-)YP-SFP-XP*

b. $[_{CP1}$ (XP1) YP SFP $]\ [_{CP2}\ XP2_{RD}$ [... t_{XP2} YP SFP]] Biclausal: *(XP-)YP-SFP-XP*

- Two more arguments can be found in my manuscript available on Lingbuzz: https://lingbuzz.net/lingbuzz/007912 (Yip 2024)

4.1 Argument #1: Imperfect copying

"Imperfect copying" is a variant of DC in which the RD chunk is distinct from its corresponding materials in the main chunk (Cheung 2015):

(19) Imperfect copying

a. 嗰佢$_k$走唔走好呢法國佬$_k$?

Gam **keoi**$_k$ zau-m-zau hou ne **Faatgwok-lou**$_k$? [C]

so 3SG leave-not-leave good SFP France-man

'So is it better for him to retreat, the French guy?' (Cheung 2015:230)

b. 他$_k$來了嗎他$_k$現在?

Ta$_k$ lai-le ma **ta**$_k$ **xianzai**? [M]

3SG arrive-PFV SFP 3SG now

'Has he arrived, (he) now?' (Shi 1992:176)

- These cases are unexpected from a monoclausal structure even with multiple copy realization of a movement chain (T. T.-M. Lee 2021; also parallel chains in Lai 2019), since both copies are identical:

(20) $[_{CP}\ [_{TP}$ **<XP>** ...] [SFP [**<XP>** ... t_{TP}]]]

➜ An alternative: *partial* Copy Deletion

- Deleting only part of the lower copy (=trace) (Nunes 2004)
- In the case of resumptive pronouns, phonological features are Late Inserted (in a Distributed Morphology framework), and that the D head surviving deletion is spelt out as a pronoun (see, e.g., van Urk 2018; Yip and Ahenkorah 2023)

(21) a. $[_{CP}\ [_{TP}\ <[_{DP}\ D\ [_{NP}\ \sout{French guy}]]>$=S/he ...] [SFP [<$[_{DP}\ D\ [_{NP}$ French guy]]> ... t_{TP}]]]

b. $[_{CP}\ [_{TP}\ <$S/he ~~now~~> has arrived] [SFP [<s/he now> ... t_{TP}]]]

← Problem: there are cases involving non-identical RD chunks that cannot be "put back" to the main chunks, such as the epithet below:

(22) Imperfect copying that lacks a monoclausal source [C, same in M]

a. **嗰架紅色嘅跑車**死咗火吖嘛**嗰架野**

[$_{DP}$ **Go-gaa** [$_{NP}$ **hungsik-ge paauce**]]$_i$ sei-zo fo aa1maa3 [$_{DP}$ ***go-gaa*** [$_{NP}$ ***je***]]$_i$!
that-CL red-GE sport.car die-PFV fire SFP that-CL thing
Lit.:'That red sport car stalled, that thing!'

b. *[$_{DP}$ **Go-gaa** [$_{NP}$ **hungsik-ge** (***je***) **paauce** (***je***)]]
that-CL red-GE thing sport.car thing

➜ Only a biclausal structure can capture (22).

(23) [$_{CP1}$ That red sport car$_i$ stalled SFP] [$_{CP2}$ that thing$_i$ [...]]

← How about a non-uniform approach that treats DC as biclausal (Cheung 2015) and GRD as monoclasual (Cheung 2009)?

← We will see below that even GRD is biclausal!

4.2 Argument #2: Absence of licensers

Analysis of the gaps in the main chunks in GRD:

(25) a. Monoclausal analysis:
Movement *traces* (or deleted copies) ➜ reconstruction to the main chunk possible

b. Biclausal analysis:
Empty categories (arguments/verbs), or *genuinely absent* (adjuncts/functional heads)
➜ reconstruction to the main chunk ***im***possible

The two analyses make opposite predictions on the licensing of non-interrogative *wh* and NPIs in GRD:

(26) a. Monoclausal approach predicts that licenser can be right-dislocated with a gap
$[_{CP}\ [_{TP}$ ... $\boxed{t_i}$ ... licensee ... $]$ $[_{SFP}$ $[$**licenser**$_i$ ... $t_{TP}]$ $]]$ (licensers reconstruct to $\boxed{t_i}$)

b. Biclausal approach predicts that licensers cannot be right-dislocated with a gap
*$[_{CP1}$ ... licensee ... SFP $]$ $[_{CP2}$ **licenser**$_i$ [... t_i ...] $]$ (no licensers in CP1)

Universal *wh*-licensing

Wh-phrases in Chinese obtain universal-like force when licensed by the distributive adverb *dou* 'all, each' leftward (T. H.-t. Lee 1986; Cheng 1995; Lin 1996, *i.a.*). Assuming that there are no (base-generated) empty adverbs, this case serves as a testing ground.

(27) Universal *wh*-licensing by *dou*

a. 佢乜野*(**都**)想食架

Keoi matje ***(dou)** soeng sik gaa3. [C]
3SG what DOU want eat SFP
'S/he wants to eat everything.'

b. 誰*(**都**)會來嗎?

Shei ***(dou)** hui lai ma? [M]
who DOU will come SFP
'Will everyone come?'

➜ The universal *wh*-licensing ***fails*** when *dou* is right-dislocated with a gap (GRD)!

➜ For the *wh*-phrase to be licensed, *dou* must also occur in the main chunks (=DC).

(28) Failure of universal *wh*-licensing in GRD

a. *佢乜野想食架**都**

*Keoi matje soeng sik gaa3 **dou**. [C]

3SG what want eat SFP DOU

Int.: 'S/he wants to eat everything.'

b. *誰會來嗎**都**?

*Shei hui lai ma **dou**? [M]

who will come SFP DOU

'Will everyone come?'

(29) Universal *wh*-licensing in DC

a. 佢乜野**都**想食架乜野**都** [C]

Keoi matje **dou** soeng sik gaa3 matje **dou**.

3SG what DOU want eat SFP what DOU

Int.: 'S/he wants to eat everything.'

b. 誰**都**會來嗎誰**都**? [M]

Shei **dou** hui lai ma shei **dou**?

who DOU will come SFP who DOU

'Will everyone come?'

Note that *dou* itself can be right-dislocated when its restrictor is a non-*wh*-nominal, such as a plural pronoun (see also Lu 1980:51 for Mandarin):

(30) a. 佢哋會嚟架**都**

Keoidei wui lai gaa3 **dou**. [C]

3PL will come SFP DOU

'They will all come.'

b. 他們會來嗎**都**?

Tamen hui lai ma **dou**? [M]

3PL will come SFP DOU

'Will they all come?'

- *dou* is movable, under both monoclausal and biclausal approaches
- *dou*, as a distributor, needs to find its restrictor to quantify over (i.e., a plural DP)

➜ (30) requires reconstruction in the *RD* chunk for quantification

➜ (28) requires reconstruction in the *main* chunk so as to license the *wh*-word

➜ which however fails, since there is no *dou* in the main chunk to begin with

- Same for reflexive/variable binding (see my manuscript)

(31) Asymmetries in reconstruction

a. *[$_{CP1}$ ... *wh* ... SFP] [$_{CP2}$ ***dou***$_k$ [... *wh* $\boxed{t_k}$ ...]] (No licensers in CP1)

b. [$_{CP1}$ ... DP_{plural} ... SFP] [$_{CP2}$ ***dou***$_k$ [... DP_{plural} $\boxed{t_k}$ ...]] (*dou* reconstructs in CP2)

Negative Polarity Item (NPI) licensing

Cungloi 'ever' in Cantonese is licensed by a following negation (*conglai* 'ever' in Mandarin, Progovac 1988):

(32) 某D媒體從來***(唔會)**報導事實既全部

Mou-di muitai cungloi ***(m-wui)** boudou sisat ge cyunbou. [C]

certain-CL.PL media ever not-will report fact GE all.part

'Some media will never report the whole truth.' (adapted from an Internet example)

While *cungloi* can be right-dislocated as reported in Cheung (2009), its licensing negation cannot.

➜ Again suggests that the negation cannot be "reconstructed" to the main chunk

(33) Asymmetry in 'ever' NPI licensing in GRD [C]

a. 某D媒體**唔會**報導事實既全部架從來 (GRD of NPI)

Mou-di muitai **m-wui** boudou sisat ge cyunbou gaa3 cungloi.

certain-CL.PL media not-will report fact GE all.part SFP ever

'Some media will never report the whole truth.'

b. *某D媒體從來報導事實既全部架**唔會** (GRD of negation)

*Mou-di muitai cungloi boudou sisat ge cyunbou gaa3 **m-wui**.

certain-CL.PL media ever report fact GE all.part SFP not-will

4.3 Argument #3: Polarity reversal

The third argument concerns whether negation can be right-dislocated.

- Heads like modals and verbs can be right-dislocated in GRD/DC (T. T.-M. Lee 2017, 2021, 2022)
- Assuming a monoclausal structure, we might expect that movement of negation is allowed in GRD
- In the biclausal structure in (34b), however, there is no empty negation in CP1

➜ CP1 thus denotes an affirmative proposition

➜ contradicts CP2 that has a negative polarity ➜ unnaturalness

(34) a. Monoclausal approach predicts that negation can be right-dislocated with a gap
[$_{CP}$ [$_{TP}$ ... t_i ...] [SFP [**negation**$_i$ ... t_{TP}]]] (head movement of negation)

b. Biclausal approach predicts that negation cannot be right-dislocated with a gap
*[$_{CP1}$ ... (affirmative) ... SFP] [$_{CP2}$ **negation**$_i$ [... t_i ...]] (contradiction)

The prediction by the biclausal approach is borne out:

➜ Negation cannot leave a gap in the main chunk, and must occur twice

(35) Negation cannot be right-dislocated in GRD

a. *佢去過美國架**仲未**

*Keoi _ heoi-gwo Meigwok gaa3 **zung mei**. [C]

3SG go-EXP US SFP still not.yet

Int.: 'S/he hasn't been to the US yet.'

b. *他去美國啊**不會**

*Ta _ qu Meiguo a **bu hui**. [M]

3SG go US SFP not will

Int.: 'S/he won't go to the US.'

(36) Negation can be right-dislocated in DC

a. 佢**仲未**去過美國架**仲未**

Keoi **zung mei** heoi-gwo Meigwok gaa3 **zung mei**. [C]

3SG still not.yet go-EXP US SFP still not.yet

'S/he hasn't been to the US yet.'

b. 他**不會**去美國啊**不會**

Ta **bu hui** qu Meiguo a **bu hui**. [M]

3SG not will go US SFP not will

'S/he won't go to the US.'

The oddness of (35) is comparable to that of juxtaposing two contradicting propositions:

(37) 佢去過美國架。#佢**仲未**去過美國架。

Keoi	heoi-gwo	Meigwok	gaa3.	#Keoi	**zung**	**mei**	heoi-gwo	Meigwok	gaa3.		[C]
3SG	go-EXP	US	SFP	3SG	still	not.yet	go-EXP	US	SFP		

'S/he has been to the US. #S/he hasn't been to the US yet.'

- Recall that with NPI licensing, the negation cannot be right-dislocated (=33)
- Even more telling: the main chunk contains an NPI that *requires* negative polarity, but the attempted reconstruction of negation still fails ➜ ***no negation*** in the main chunk in the first place
- Not limited to syntactic negation: any expression that conveys semantic negation cannot be right-dislocated (see my manuscript)

5 Empty categories in GRD

I propose that CP1 allows three types of (base-generated) empty elements that correspond to the pronounced elements in CP2/DeFocP, all of them are ***independently motivated*** in Chinese:

- #1 Null **subjects** (i.e., *pro*) (Huang 1982, 1989, *et seq.*)
- #2 Null **objects** (Li 2005; Aoun and Li 2008)

(41) Empty objects [C, same in M]

[Context: Tommy is showing off his new MacBook. You say:]

a. 我都有啦

Ngo dou jau $e_{\mathbf{O}}$ laa1.
1SG also have SFP
'I also have (a Mac).'

b. 我都有啦mac機

[$_{CP1}$ Ngo dou jau $e_{\mathbf{O}}$ laa1] [$_{CP2}$ **mek1** **gei1**]. (GRD)
1SG also have SFP Mac computer
'I also have a Mac.'

#3 Empty **verbs** (copular and non-copular verbs) (Tang 1999, 2001b, 2001a)

(42) Empty copula [C, same in M]

a. 今日星期日吖嘛

Gamjat e_{COP} singkeijat aa3.
today Sunday SFP
'Today is Sunday.'

b. 今日星期日吖嘛**係**

[$_{\text{CP1}}$ Gamjat e_{COP} singkeijat aa3] [$_{\text{CP2}}$ **hai**]. (GRD)
today Sunday SFP COP
'Today is Sunday.'

(43) Non-copular empty verbs [M, same in C]

a. 張三三個蘋果，李四四個橘子

Zhangsan e_{V} san-ge pingguo, Lisi e_{V} si-ge juzi.
Zhangsan three-CL apple Lisi four-CL orange
'Zhangsan (bought, ate, etc.) three apples, and Lisi four oranges.' (Tang 2001b:205)

b. 張三三個蘋果嗎{**要/有/買了**}?

[$_{\text{CP1}}$ Zhangsan e_{V} SAN-ge pingguo ma] [$_{\text{CP2}}$ {**yao/ you/ mai-le**...}]? (GRD)
Zhangsan three-CL apple SFP want have buy-PFV
'Does/did Zhangsan {want/ have/ buy} *three* apples?'

- No other empty categories are allowed in CP1: in the case of GRD of adjuncts, CP1 simply lacks the adjuncts. The same applies to functional heads like negation and modals.

(44) Four types of GRD classified by empty categories in CP1

a. [$_{CP1}$ $e_{\mathbf{S}}$ V O SFP] [$_{CP2}$ S [...]] (Empty subject)

b. [$_{CP1}$ S V $e_{\mathbf{O}}$ SFP] [$_{CP2}$ O [...]] (Empty object)

c. [$_{CP1}$ S $e_{\mathbf{V}}$ O SFP] [$_{CP2}$ V [...]] (Empty verb)

d. [$_{CP1}$ S V O SFP] [$_{CP2}$ X(P) [...]] (No empty categories)

(45) Support from two types of correlations

a. *Language-internal*
GRD is subject to the same constraints that govern the distribution of empty categories (see my manuscript)

b. *Cross-linguistic*
- The availability of argumental GRD correlates with that of null arguments
- Verb GRD is cross-linguistically rare but is available in Chinese due to empty verbs

6 Conclusion

Summary of the talk

- A simpler yet empirically more adequate grammar of RD in Chinese:
  I have argued that GRD and RD in Chinese have a ***unified biclausal structure***.
  - Novel arguments from imperfect copying and asymmetries between the main and RD chunks
  - The two clauses are coordinated and form **:**P (specifying coordination, after Ott and de Vries 2016)
  - The second clause involves movement and deletion (Cheung 2015)
- A better understanding on cross-linguistic variations in relation to empty categories:
  I have proposed that GRD only differs from DC in the use of ***empty categories*** in the first clause.
  - GRD is constrained by the availability of empty categories
  - Captures the cross-linguistic variations: certain GRD variants are permitted only in Chinese due to the independently available empty categories, which are not available in some other languages

(46) $[_{:P}\ [_{\text{main}}\ \ldots\ \{e_i\ /\ \text{XP}_i\}\ \ldots\ \text{SFP}\ ]\ [_{:'}\ \mathbf{:}\ [_{\text{RD}}\ \text{XP}_i\ \ [\ \ldots\ t_{\text{XP}}\ \ldots\ ]\ ]]]]$

(e = empty category, shaded = non-pronunciation)