# *Last but not least*: a comparative perspective on right dislocation in Alasha Mongolian*

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## Abstract

The primary goal of this paper is to understand the information structure of right dislocation (RD). I report a variation in RD in Asian languages with regard to the information structural status of the right dislocated elements. The discussion focuses on Alasha, a Mongolic language spoken in Mongolia. Through a comparative perspective on right dislocation, I show that RD languages come in two types: one that allow focused elements to be right dislocated, and one that disallow so. I argue that Alasha belongs to the former type, and I propose a bi-clausal analysis on Alasha RD, where Focus movement may occur in the second clause. The findings have implications on the typology of the licensing condition of Focus Projection in Asian languages. Ultimately, the findings of this paper strengthen a non-uniform approach to RD in natural languages, despite their surface similarities, in both syntactic structure and information structure.

Keywords: right dislocation, information structure, focus, Focus Projection, parameters

# Contents

# 1  Introduction

The primary goal of this paper is to understand the information structure of right dislocation (RD). I report a variation in RD in Asian languages with regard to the information structural status of the right dislocated elements. The discussion focuses on Alasha, a Mongolic language spoken in Mongolia. Through a comparative perspective on right dislocation, I show that RD languages come in two types: one that allow focused elements to be right dislocated, and one that disallow so. I argue that Alasha belongs to the former type. The findings have implications on the typology of the licensing condition of Focus Projection in Asian languages.

The information structure of RD is less studied than its syntactic structure. One consensus in previous works seem to be that right dislocated elements are typically topics, old information, background materials, or defocused/de-emphisized elements. This is reported in East Asian languages (Kuno 1978; Takami 1995; Takano 2014; Lee 2017; 2020, i.a.), in South Asian languages (Butt and King 1996; Dayal 2003; Manetta 2012, i.a.), as well as in Germanic languages (Ott and de Vries 2016, i.a.). It has been further proposed that, at least in some languages like Cantonese and Mandarin, the right-dislocated elements can *only* be topics/defocused elements (Lee 2017, 2020).[1] [2] In other words, focused elements appear to be incompatible with RD in general.

Against this background, it will be shown in detail that RD in Alasha contrasts sharply with Cantonese and Mandarin, since Alasha RD can host focused elements, in addition to topics/defocused elements. This suggests that at least some languages allow RD to additionally target focused elements, and thus RD does not have an invariant discourse function across languages. This observation raises two non-trivial questions in the study of RD. The first one concerns the syntactic structure of RD in Alasha, i.e., how focused elements obtain the position in the right periphery in the derivation. I will propose an extended version of a bi-clausal analysis that employs Focus movement and remnant deletion on Alasha RD (Kuno 1978; Abe 1999; Tanaka 2001; Öztürk 2013; Ott and de Vries 2016).

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1. Since the distinction between topics, old information, background materials, or defocused/de-emphisized elements has no bearing on the proposal, I use the term *topics and defocused elements* as a cover term for these elements.

2. This is consistent with the proposal in L. Y.-L. Cheung (2009), which suggests that the host clause, but not the right dislocated elements, receive focus interpretation.

The second question concerns the cross-linguistic variation on information structure of RD, i.e., whether focused elements can be right dislocated. I will develop a *structural* account on the variation that makes reference to how Focus Projection is licensed in the CP domain (Rizzi 1997, *et seq.*). I propose that these languages exhibit a parametric difference with regard to the overt/covert requirement on the complement of the Focus Projection, and it is precisely this difference that determines whether RD can host focused elements or not. Ultimately, the findings of this paper strengthen a non-uniform approach to RD in natural languages, despite their surface similarities, in both syntactic structure and information structure.

The rest of this paper consists of five sections. In section 2, I give an overview on the properties of RD in Alasha, which are also commonly found in RD in other languages. In section 3, I illustrate the "liberal" nature of Alasha RD by reporting that RD in the language can target both topics/defocused elements and focused elements. In section 4, I propose a bi-clausal derivation of Alasha RD, and suggest that the right dislocated element belongs to a separate clause that has undergone Focus movement, followed by remnant deletion of the rest of the clause. In section 5, I develop an account on the variation on information structure of RD across languages. I attribute the variation to a parametric difference in the licensing condition of the Focus Projection among languages. I conclude in section 6.

## 2   Basic properties of right dislocation in Alasha

This sections serves as an overview of right dislocation in Alasha. Alasha RD is productive in colloquial speech, as with other East Asian languages that also allow RD, such as Japanese, Korean and Cantonese. The properties of Alasha RD reported in this section is largely shared by these RD languages. Throughout this paper, I use the term RD pre-theoretically to refer to constructions where some elements appear in post-verbal position (in OV languages) or post-sentence-final-particle position (in VO languages). These elements (indicated by $\alpha$ in (1)) may correspond to a gap $\Delta$ in the host clause (= right dislocation), or to some overt elements (indicated by $\beta$ in (1b)), such as an identical

copy or a resumptive pronoun (= dislocation copying).[3]

(1)  Schematic representation of right dislocation and dislocation copying in OV languages

   a.  [$_{\text{Host clause}}$ ... ... $\Delta$ ... V ] $\alpha$             right dislocation (RD)

   b.  [$_{\text{Host clause}}$ ... ... $\beta$ ... V ] $\alpha$            dislocation copying (DC)

## 2.1  Type flexibility

Alasha RD can target different types of arguments such as subjects and objects, as shown in (2). These arguments occupy a post-verbal position in Alasha. The example in (2b) further shows that the right dislocated element occupies a position after the question particle.

(2)  $\alpha$ = Arguments

   a.  $\Delta$  tun-d  dzaxdl-ig  bic-we  **Baatar**          Subjects

      3SG-DAT  letter-ACC  write-PST  Baatar

      'Batar wrote a letter to him.'

   b.  ter  $\Delta$  xar-sen-oo  **nam-ig**          Direct objects

      3SG  see-PST-Q  1SG-ACC

      'Did he see me?'

   c.  ter  $\Delta$  dzaxdl-ig  bic-we  **Baatar-t**        Inirect objects

      3SG  letter-ACC  write-PST  Baatar-DAT

      'He wrote a letter to Batar.'

Adjuncts and adverbials can also be right dislocated, as shown in (3) and (4), respectively.

(3)  $\alpha$ = Adjuncts

   a.  bi  $\Delta$  talx-ig  xi-sen  **cam-te  xamt**

      1SG  bread-ACC  make-PST  2SG-COM  together

      'I made bread with you together.'

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3. I assume with Tanaka (2001), Lai (2019), and Lee (2021) that RD and DC involve a similar mechanism in the derivation and should not be treated separately.

b. ter  Δ  tuudurxor  toglo-deg  **ger-t-een**

3SG  piano  play-HAB  home-LOC-REFL.POSS

'S/he plays piano at home.'

(4)  <u>α = Adverbials</u>

a. ter  Δ  gwe-sen-oo  **utsugdur**

3SG  run-PST-Q  yesterday

'Did s/he run yesterday?'

b. Baatar  Δ  ons-sen  **niginte**

Baatar  sleep-PST  already

'Baatar already slept.'

Furthermore, clausal elements, such as the complement clause of attitude verbs in (5) and the antecedent clause of a conditional in (6), can be right dislocated as well. Note that there no obligatory RD of complement clauses, unlike, e.g., Hindi-Urdu languages (Mahajan 1990; Dayal 1996, i.a.).

(5)  <u>α = Complement clauses</u>

Baatar  Δ  utsugdur  xel-sen  **unuudur irx-guu  gec**.

Baatar  yesterday  say-PST  today  come-not  C

'Baatar said yesterday that (he would) not come today.'

(6)  <u>α = Conditionals</u>

a. **buro orx-gu bol**  ci  culang  jewen-oo?                  baseline

rain  fall-not  COP  you  party  go-Q

'If it does not rain, will you go to the party?'

b. Δ  ci  culang  jewen-oo  **buro  orx-guu  bol**?

you  party  go-Q  rain  fall-not  COP

'Will you go to the party, if it does not rain?'

## 2.2  Dislocation copying

A variant of RD in Alasha involves no "gap" in the host clause. Instead, an identical copy occupy the "gap" position. I refer to these cases as *dislocation copying*. Some examples are given in (7) and (8).

(7)  α = an identical copy of arguments

  a.  **bi**  Baatar-t    nom  og-sen **bi**

      1SG  Baatar-DAT  book  1SG

      'I gave (a) book to Baatar.'

  b.  ter  **Baatar-t**   nom  og-wa    **Baatar-t**

      3SG  Baatar-DAT  book  write-PST  Baatar-DAT

      'S/he gave (a) book to Baatar.'

(8)  α = an identical copy of adjuncts/adverbials

  a.  Baatar  **niginte**  ont-sen   **niginte**

      Baatar  already  sleep-PST  already

      'Baatar already slept'

  b.  ter  **ger-t-een**        tuudurxor  toglo-deg  **ger-t-een**

      3SG  home-LOC-REFL.POSS  piano     play-HAB  home-LOC-REFL.POSS

      'S/he plays piano at home.'

Additionally, it is possible to have a mismatch between the element in the α-position and its correlating element in the host clause. For example, in (9b), the object in the host clause is replaced by an overt pronoun, which is co-indexed with 'Huh Sudar'. I refer to cases like (9b) as *imperfect copying*.

(9)  α = an imperfect copy

  a.  Baatar  **Huh Sudar**-ig    ons-sen,  **Huh Sudar**-ig                perfect copying

      Baatar  "Blue Book"-ACC  read-PST  "Blue Book"-ACC

      'Baatar read "Blue Book".'

  b.  Baatar  **ter**$_i$-ig  ons-sen,  **Huh Sudar**$_i$-ig                imperfect copying

      Baatar  it-ACC  read-PST  "Blue Book"-ACC

      'Baatar read it, "Blue Book".'

# 3 Information structure and right dislocation

After discussing the basic properties of Alasha RD, I now turn to the information structure of RD sentences, which receives relatively little systematical investigation in the literature. I show that Alasha RD (ARD) can target both topics/defocused elements, and focused elements. With an view to illustrate this "liberal" nature of ARD with regard to its information structure, I contrast Alasha RD with Cantonese RD (CRD) and Mandarin RD (MRD). The right dislocated elements in the latter group are argued to resist focus interpretations thoroughly (Chiang 2017; Lee 2017, 2020; Yip 2023). The contrast between Alasha and Cantonese indicates that RD does not involve a uniform information structure cross-linguistically.

## 3.1 Topics and defocused elements

I first show that the $\alpha$-position in Alasha *can* host elements that indicate topics, old information, background materials, or defocused/de-emphisized elements. This is also reported in other East Asian languages (Kuno 1978; Takami 1995; Takano 2014; Lee 2017; 2020, i.a.), in South Asian languages (Butt and King 1996; Dayal 2003; Manetta 2012, i.a.), as well as in Germanic languages (Ott and de Vries 2016, i.a.). The two examples in (10) show that topics in Alasha can be right dislocated. (10a) involves a topicalized object, whereas (10b) involves a base generated topic, bearing a part-whole relation with the object. Note that the copula verb *bol* arguably acquires the usage of a topic marker ('if it is...' / 'as for') (Janhunen 2012).

(10)   $\alpha$ = Topics/defocused elements

    a.   $\Delta$ bi  on-sen  **in  nom-ig  bol**

           1SG read-PST this book-ACC COP

       'This book, I read.'

    b.   $\Delta$ bi   asmel dorte **jimsem bol**

           1SG apple like  fruits   COP

       'As for fruits, I like apples.'

## 3.2 Focused elements

When it comes to focused elements, there appears to be a split among RD languages: (i) languages that allow focused elements in the $\alpha$-position, and (ii) languages that disallow focused elements in the $\alpha$-position. In what follows, I compare ARD with CRD/MRD, and show that Alasha belongs to the former type.

### 3.2.1 Focus intonation

Elements that bear focus intonation (indicated by capital letters) in Alasha can appear in the $\alpha$-position. For example, both sentences in (11) convey a contrastive reading on "to school".[4]

(11)  $\alpha$ in ARD can receive focus intonation

    a.  Baatar **SORGOOLI-d** jav-san                    baseline

        Baatar school-DAT    go-PST

        'Baatar went to SCHOOL (not other places).'

    b.  Baatar jav-san **SORGOOLI-d**                    RD

        Baatar go-PST school-DAT

        'Baatar went to SCHOOL (not other places).'

Importantly, Alasha RD contrasts with Cantonese RD - focus intonation is considered infelicitous when assigned to elements in the $\alpha$-position, exemplified in (12).

(12)  $\alpha$ in CRD resists focus intonation

    #keoi m   geidak     gaau   $\Delta$ aa3 **FAAN BOUMENG BIU**     (Lee 2020, p.141)

    3SG not remember submit     SFP CL   application  form

    'S/he forgot to submit the application form.'

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4. While the two sentences in (11) are reported to be truth-conditionally and information structurally identical, (11b) may come with additional discourse effects. One possibility is the creation of suspense. I leave this to future research.

### 3.2.2 Contrastive focus

The $\alpha$-position in Alasha can host elements that are contrasted with another element introduced in the sentence. The sentence in (13a) serves as the baseline example, where 'at school' is contrasted with 'at home'. (13b) shows that the contrastive reading remains when 'at school' is right dislocated.

(13) <u>ARD allows contrastive focus</u>

    a.  bi   Baatar-ig  **sorgooli-d** baix-ig      xar-sen, gerte     bish             baseline

        1SG  Baatar-ACC  school-DAT  exist.INF-ACC  see-PST, home-DAT  not

        'I saw Baatar at school, not at home.'

    b.  bi   Baatar-ig  $\Delta$ baix-ig      xar-sen, **sorgooli-d**, ger-te    bish          RD

        1SG  Baatar-ACC     exist.INF-ACC  see-PST  school-DAT, home-DAT  not

        'I saw Baatar at school, not at home.'

Cantonese RD shows an opposite pattern: the $\alpha$-position cannot host contrastive focus in a way similar to Alasha, as shown in (14). Note that the two clauses in (14) are felicitous if they are uttered separately, i.e., if the right dislocated elements are not in contrastive focus.

(14) <u>CRD disallows contrastive focus</u>                                (Lee 2020, p.141, adapted)

    #Ngo  heoi-gwo  $\Delta$  aa3  **Hoenggong**. Daan mou     heoi-gwo  $\Delta$  aa3  **Oumum**

    1SG  go-EXP        SFP  Hong Kong   but   not.have go-EXP        SFP  Macau

    'I have been to Hong Kong. But (I) have not been to Macau.'

### 3.2.3 Focus particles and their focus associates

In Alasha, 'only'-focus can be marked by two ways, namely, by the pre-nominal marker *dzoxung* 'only' or by the suffix *-l*.

(15) 'Only'-focus marking in Alasha

    **dzoxung bi**/  **bi-l**      Baatar-t    nom  og-sen

    only       1SG/ 1SG-only  Baatar-DAT  book  give-PST

    'Only me gave (a) book to Baatar.'

Crucially, the $\alpha$-position in Alasha can host both the focus particle and its focus associate. This is exemplified in (16a). Furthermore, (16b) shows that the focused elements can be targeted by dislocation copying as well, resulting in multiple occurrence of the focus particle and its focus associate.

(16)  <u>ARD can target 'only'-focus</u>

    a.  $\Delta$ Baatar-t    nom og-sen  **dzoxung bi/**  **bi-l**

        Baatar-DAT book give-PST only     1SG/ 1SG-only

        'Only me gave (a) book to Baatar.'

    b.  **bi-l**     Baatar-t    nom og-sen  **bi-l**

        1SG-only Baatar-DAT book give-PST only-1SG

        'Only me gave (a) book to Baatar.'

The situation is different in Cantonese and Mandarin. In Cantonese, the focus particle *zinghai* 'only' and its focus associate cannot be right dislocated, as shown in (17a). They cannot be involved in dislocation copying either, as in (17b).[5]

(17)  <u>CRD resists 'only'-focus</u>

    a. ??$\Delta$ maai-zo  ni-bun syu    zaa3 **zinghai ngo**

        buy-PERF this-CL book SFP    only    1SG

        'Only me bought this book.'

    b. ??**zinghai ngo** maai-zo  ni-bun syu    zaa3 **zinghai ngo**

        only     1SG buy-PERF this-CL book SFP    only    1SG

        'Only me bought this book.'

In a similar vein, focused elements marked by the focus particle *shi* in Mandarin cannot be right dislocated. The cases in (18) involve imperfect copying in dislocation copying sentences. None of them tolerates the presence of the focused elements in the $\alpha$-position, regardless whether the focus particle is present or not.

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5. The judgment for (17b) reported by my five Cantonese consultants differ from the one reported in Lai (2019, p.250). My consultants point out that there is a contrast in acceptability between dislocation copying cases with and without focused elements.

(18)  <u>MRD resists *shi*-focus</u>

    a. #Shi **ta**$_i$ zhaodao Lisi a **Mali**$_i$                 (Chiang 2017, p.310)

       FOC she find    Lisi SFP Mary

       'It was her$_i$ who found Lisi, Mary$_i$.'

    b. *Ta$_i$ yinggai   keneng xihuan Lisi ba **shi Mali**$_i$.        (Chiang 2022, p.4)

       She probably maybe like    Lisi SFP FOC Mary

       'She$_i$ probably likes Lisi, Mary$_i$.'

To see a different type of focus marking, 'even'-focus in Alasha can be marked by the post-nominal *xurtil* or the suffix *-c*. They can appear with their focus associates in the $\alpha$-position, in both RD and DC sentences.

(19)  <u>ARD can target 'even'-focus</u>

    a. Baatar $\Delta$ utsugdur ap-pa **in nom-ig xurtil**

       Baatar      yesterday buy-PST this book-ACC even

       'Even this book, Baatar bought yesterday.'

    b. bi **nom-on-c**    gesen Baatar-t   og-sen **nom-on-c**

       1SG **book-REFL-even** GESEN Baatar-DAT give-PST **book-REFL-even**

       'Even my book, I gave (it) to Baatar.'

In contrast, the Cantonese counterparts of these sentences are degraded. 'Even'-focus in Cantonese is typically expressed by a *lin ... dou* 'even ... also ... 'construction.[6] The focus associate of *lin* 'even' cannot appear in the $\alpha$-position.

(20)  <u>CRD resists even-focus</u>

    a. ??ngo dou m  wui tai  gaa3 **lin bouzi**                 (Lee 2020, p.141)

       1SG also not will read SFP   even newspaper

       'I will not even read newspaper'

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6. For extensive discussions of this construction in Chinese, see Shyu (1995), Badan (2007), and Lee (2022), i.a.

b. ??ngo **lin** **bouzi**  dou m wui tai gaa3 **lin** **bouzi**   dou

1SG even newspaper also not will read SFP even newspaper also

'I will not even read newspaper'

### 3.2.4 Focus interpretation on verbs

Alasha allows the so-called "verb doubling" or "predicate cleft" constructions, where a verb occurs in multiple positions in a sentence, and receives focus interpretations (see Hein (2018) for extensive cross-linguistic investigations; see also Landau (2006), Vicente (2007), and Cheng and Vicente (2013) for formal analyses). To see some examples, in (21a), the verb *avx* 'buy' is doubly realized, where the first occurrence is nominalized (and topicalized), and the second one appears in its finite form. The verb receives a contrastive reading (i.e., the verb 'buy' is contrasted with other verb like 'read'). In the second case in (21b), the first occurrence of the verb *avx* 'buy' appears in its infinitival form and is associated with *xurtil* 'even'.

(21)    Verb doubling constructions in Alasha

    a.  *Contrastive focus on verbs*

        bi nom-ig **av-ün** **bol** av-sen

        1SG book-ACC buy-NMLZ COP buy-PST

        'As for buying, I have BOUGHT this book (but I didn't READ it).'

    b.  *'Even'-focus associated with verbs*

        Baatar in nom-ig **avx-ig** **xurtil avx** dor-guu

        Baatar this book-ACC buy.INF-ACC even buy.INF like-not

        'Baatar didn't even want to BUY this book (let alone to READ it).'

Importantly, while these verbs receive a focus interpretation (of different sorts), they can be targeted for RD and appear in the $\alpha$-position (together with the topic marker or the focus marker), as shown in the sentences in (22).

(22) <u>ARD can target a focused verb</u>

    a.   bi   nom-ig    △ **av-sen**, **av-ün**    **bol**

        1SG  book-ACC     buy-PST  buy-NMLZ  COP

        'As for buying, I have BOUGHT this book (but I didn't READ it).'

    b.   Baatar  in   nom-ig    △ **avx** dor-guu, **avx-ig**    **xurtil**

        Baatar  this  book-ACC     buy  like-not  buy.INF-ACC  even

        'Baatar didn't even want to BUY this book.'

Here, it is instructive to note that Cantonese similarly allows verb doubling constructions as Alasha. The sentences in (23) are the counterparts of the ones in (21).

(23) <u>Verb doubling constructions in Cantonese</u>

    a.   *Contrastive focus on verbs*

        **Maai** keoi hai **maai**-gwo go-bun syu   ge2.         (Lee 2022, p.38, adapted)

        buy    3SG  FOC buy-EXP   that-CL book SFP

        'As for buying, s/he has BOUGHT that book (but I haven't READ it).'

    b.   *'Even'-focus associated with verbs*

        Lin  **tai**  keoi dou m-**tai**    ni-bun syu   aa3.        (Lee 2022, p.38, adapted)

        even  read  3SG  also  not-read  this-CL  book  SFP

        'S/he didn't even READ this book.'

However, these sentences become degraded if the first occurrence of the verb is right dislocated, as shown in (24).

(24) <u>CRD cannot target a focused verb</u>

    a. ?? △ keoi hai **maai**-gwo go-bun syu   ge2, **maai**

          3SG  FOC buy-EXP    that-CL book SFP  buy

        'As for buying, s/he has BOUGHT that book (but I haven't READ it).'

b. ??△ keoi dou m-**tai** ni-bun syu aa3, **lin tai**

      3sg also not-read this-cl book sfp even read

   'S/he didn't even READ this book.'

It should be noted that verbs in Cantonese can be right dislocated, as long as it does not receive a focus interpretation (L. Y.-L. Cheung 2015; Lee 2017, 2020, 2022). The modal *wui* in the host clause in (25) is not associated with the focus marker *hai*, unlike (25), hence the lack of contrastive focus reading.

(25)   <u>CRD can target a verb without focus interpretation</u>

    Keoi **wui** zoeng gaan uk maai-ceot-heoi gaa3 laa3 **wui**.(L. Y.-L. Cheung 2015, p.248)

    3sg will zoeng cl house sell-out-go sfp sfp will

    'S/he will sell the house.'

To sum up, while both Alasha and Cantonese allow verb doubling constructions (that assigns certain focus interpretations on the verb), only Alasha allows a focused verb to appear in the $\alpha$-position.

### 3.2.5 Two exceptions

It is worth noting, however, that not all focused elements can be right dislocated in Alasha. These elements include (i) *wh*-expressions and (ii) informational focus (as in question-answer pairs). For example, $\alpha$ in ARD cannot host *wh*-expressions. In this regard, Alasha is similar to Cantonese, which also disallows RD of *wh*-expressions.

(26)   <u>ARD resists *wh*-expressions</u>

   # △ Baatar-t nom og-sen be **xen**

     Baatar-dat book give-pst q who

   'Who gave (a) book to Baatar?'

(27)  CRD resists *wh*-expressions

#keoi  m    geidak    gaau  Δ  aa3  **matje**                    (Lee 2020, p.141)

3sg  not  remember  submit      sfp  what

'What did s/he forget to submit?'

Additionally, $\alpha$ in ARD cannot host informational focus (as in question-answer pairs) either. Again, this is similar to CRD, exemplified by the infelicity in both (28) and (29).

(28)  ARD: In response to "who gave a book to Baatar?"

#Δ  Baatar-t    nom  og-sen  **Erdin**

Baatar-dat  book  give-pst  Erdin

'Erdin gave (a) book to Baatar.'

(29)  CRD: In response to 'who bought a computer?'

#Δ  wui  maai  jat-bou  dinnou    lo1  **keoi**                 (p.203-204, adapted)

will  buy  one-cl  computer  sfp  3sg

'S/he will buy a computer.'

These two observations are often taken as evidence for the topichood or defocused status of elements occupying the $\alpha$-position (Kuno 1978; Takami 1995; Takano 2014; Lee 2017, 2020). However, as we will see shortly, these observations receives an alternative explanation under a bi-clausal analysis of RD in Alasha. In other words, the infelicity resulted in cases in (26) and (28) is not necessarily related to the focus nature of the right dislocated elements.

## 3.3   Interim summary

In this section, I showed that the $\alpha$-position in Alasha can host both topics and (most) focused elements. While there are two exceptions relating to *wh*-expressions and informational focus, it is still in sharp contrast with languages like Cantonese and Mandarin, which consistently resist focused elements in the $\alpha$-position. Table 1 summarizes the discussions in this section.

It should be remarked that Alasha is not unique among all RD languages in allowing focused ele-

| $\alpha$-position | Alasha RD | Cantonese/Mandarin RD |
|---|---|---|
| Focus intonation | ✔ (11) | ✘ (12) |
| Contrastive focus | ✔ (13) | ✘ (14) |
| 'Only'-focus | ✔ (16) | ✘ (17) |
| 'Even'-focus | ✔ (19) | ✘ (20) |
| Focused verb | ✔ (22) | ✘ (24) |
| *Wh*-expressions | ✘ (26) | ✘ (27) |
| Informational focus | ✘ (28) | ✘ (29) |

Table 1: A summary of the comparison between ARD and CRD/MRD

ments to occupy the $\alpha$-position. In the discussions of Korean and Japanese RD, it is sometimes suggested or mentioned in passing that the right dislocated elements can be focused elements. For example, Ko (2015) suggests that right-dislocated elements in Korean are specificational focus, a suggestion endorsed by Abe (2019) for right dislocation in Japanese. The discussions in Yamashita (2011) and Takita (2011) also suggest that contrastive elements and elements associated with 'only' can be right dislocated in Japanese.[7] The discussions so far thus reveals that languages that allow RD come in two types, listed in (30), depending on whether focused elements can appear in the $\alpha$-position.

(30)   Two types of RD languages

    a.   $\alpha$ can host topics/defocused elements only                 e.g., Cantonese, Mandarin

    b.   $\alpha$ can host focused elements, and topics/defocused elements     e.g., Mongolian, Japanese

Before I turn to an explanation on this variation on RD (to be discussed in section 5), I first present a syntactic analysis on Alasha RD that allows both topics and focused elements to occupy the $\alpha$-position.

# 4   A bi-clausal analysis on Alasha RD

In section 4.1, I propose and elaborate on a bi-clausal analysis on ARD, where the elements in the $\alpha$ originate from a separate clause, derived via movement plus remnant deletion. In section 4.2, I

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7. While Abe (2019) specifically argues that Japanese RD involve focus movement, but the focus nature of the right dislocated elements is not extensively discussed.

provide evidence for the proposed movement in the second clause in Alasha. I turn to evidence for a bi-clausal structure, and argue against a mono-clausal analysis in section 4.3.
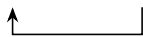
## 4.1    The components in the proposal

The proposal here shares the same spirit in the analyses in Abe (1999) and Tanaka (2001) proposed for Japanese RD and in Öztürk (2013) proposed for RD in Khalkha (Mongolian), in (Ott and de Vries 2016) for Germanic languages, among others. I adopt a bi-clausal analysis where the element in the $\alpha$-position is the remnant of the second clause: it first undergoes movement, and the rest of the clause is deleted. Particularly, I suggest that the movement in the second clause can be either Topic movement or Focus movement in Alasha (following by deletion). The proposal involves the following components in (31):

(31)    Components in a bi-clausal analysis on Alasha RD

    a.    RD involves a bi-clausal structure generated by clausal repetition that is based on proposition identity (Abe 1999, 2019)

    b.    A *pro*-form may appear in the first clause (Kuno 1978; Tanaka 2001)

    c.    Topic movement or Focus movement occurs in the second clause (cf. Abe 2019)

    d.    Subsequent deletion targets Comp of TopicP or FocusP in the second clause

Depending on the informational structural status of the element in the $\alpha$-position, a RD sentence in Alasha can be ambiguous between a Topic structure or a Focus structure. The two structures in (32) schematically illustrate a case of object RD. The object may receive topic or focus interpretation.[8]

(32)    A schematic representation of the proposed bi-clausal analysis for object RD

    a.    [$_{CP}$ Subj Obj/*pro* V ] [$_{\textbf{TopicP}}$ Obj ~~[ Subj Obj V ]~~ ]    Topic movement

    b.    [$_{CP}$ Subj Obj/*pro* V ] [$_{\textbf{FocusP}}$ Obj ~~[ Subj Obj V ]~~ ]    Focus movement
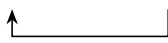
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8. I assume the Topic projection may host old information, background materials, defocused elements.

Two remarks pertaining to the *pro*-form in the first clause are in order. First, if a null *pro*-form exists in the first clause, it give rises to a "gap" (i.e., the canonical RD). If the *pro*-form is a resumptive pronoun, we obtain an *imperfect copying* case. If no *pro*-form is involved and the right dislocated elements occurs in both clauses, this results in a *perfect copying* case. In other words, the alternation between RD and DC cases depends on the choice of the *pro*-form.

Second, in cases of RD of a focused verb, it might be that there is also a null *pro*-form for verbs (as in (33a)). But this does not necessarily commit us to the existence of such a predicative *pro*-form. It is also possible that there is no *pro*-form at all in the first clause. In the absence of such a *pro*-form, the structure given in (33b) still respect propositional identity (as a condition on a bi-clausal analysis) - the two clauses differ only in information structure.[9]

(33)   A schematic representation of the proposed bi-clausal analysis for RD of focused verbs

    a.   [$_{CP}$ Subj Obj *pro* V ] [$_{\textbf{FocusP}}$ V ~~[ Subj Obj V V ]~~ ]            Focus movement

    b.   [$_{CP}$ Subj Obj V ] [$_{\textbf{FocusP}}$ V ~~[ Subj Obj V V ]~~ ]              Focus movement

## 4.2   Evidence for movement

Turning to evidence for movement, Alasha RD can span across complement CP boundaries. The two sentences in (34) show that an indirect object and of a focused verb can be right dislocated from within a complement clause.

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9. The movement of the focused verb suggested in the second clause is independently supported by the fact that it can be fronted to the initial position in a matrix clause. Consider the alternative form of sentences in (21) in (i):

(i)   Verb doubling constructions in Alasha

    a.   **av-ün**    **bol** bi  nom-ig   Δ **av-sen**
       buy-NMLZ COP 1SG book-ACC     buy-PST
       'As for buying, I have BOUGHT this book (but I didn't READ it).'
    b.   **avx-ig**    **xurtil** Baatar in  nom-ig  Δ   **avx**    dor-guu
       buy.INF-ACC even  Baatar this book-ACC buy.INF like-not
       'Baatar didn't even want to BUY this book (let alone to READ it).'

(34)  <u>Long distance ARD</u>

  a.  Baatar [Δ nom-ig     og-sen    gec] xel-sen **Tsetsege-t**

      Baatar      book-ACC give-PST C    say-PST Tsetsege-DAT

      'Baatar said that (he) gave the book to Tsetsege.'

  b.  [Baatar in    nom-ig    Δ **avx** dor-guu] Erdin bodxoor, **avx-ig    xurtil**

      Baatar  this book-ACC    buy want-not Erdin think      buy-ACC even

      'Erdin thinks that Baatar doesn't even want to BUY this book (let alone to READ it).'

However, ARD exhibits island sensitivity in non-adjunct cases. By way of illustration, the element in the α-position cannot be associated with a gap (i.e., a *pro*-form under the current analysis) contained in a syntactic island. The sentence in (35b) illustrates this point with a relative clause island.

(35)  <u>Relative clause islands</u>

  a.  Baatar [Tsetsege **Erdin-t**     og-sen]  nom-ig    xulgail-sen.                  baseline

      Baatar Tsetsege  Erdin-DAT give-PST book-ACC steal-PST

      'Baatar stole the book that Tsetsege gave to Erdin.'

  b.  *Baatar [Tsetsege Δ og-sen]  nom-ig     xulgail-sen **Erdin-t**.              RD

      Baatar Tsetsege     give-PST book-ACC steal-PST    Erdin-DAT

      'Baatar stole the book that Tsetsege gave to Erdin.'

Similarly, RD of the focused verbs in verb doubling constructions also exhibits island sensitivity. For example, (36b) shows that the first occurrence of the verb 'read' in (36a) cannot be right dislocated across an NP complement island.

(36)  <u>NP complement islands</u>

  a.  bi  [tun-ii    in   nom-ig    **onsx-ig**     **xurtil** ons-sen-gui] baidl-ig xulaan

      1SG 3SG-GEN this book-ACC read.INF-ACC even    read-PST-not fact-ACC accept

        av-gui

        get-not

      'I cannot accept the fact that he did not even READ this book.'

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b. bi [tun-ii in nom-ig Δ ons-sen-gui] baidl-ig xulaan av-gui, **onsx-ig**

1SG 3SG-GEN this book-ACC read-PST-not fact-ACC accept get-not read.INF-ACC

**xurtil**

even

There is one complication with regard to island sensitivity in RD. As opposed to RD of arguments and verbs, RD of adjunct is island-insensitive. The minimal pairs in (37) show that while RD of the object '(a) new cat' in (37a) cannot escape the NP complement island, RD of the adjunct 'at home' is acceptable as shown in (37b).

(37) Argument-adjunct asymmetry with regard to island sensitivity in ARD

a. *bi [Baatar-in gerteen Δ tejex] sanal-ig jushuusen-gui **sin-muur**

1SG Baatar-GEN home-DAT-REFL raise suggestion-ACC agree-not new-cat

b. bi [Baatar-in Δ sin-muur tejex] sanal-ig jushuusen-gui **ger-te-n**

1SG Baatar-GEN new-cat raise suggestion-ACC agree-not home-DAT-REFL

The contrast implies that RD of adjuncts do not share the same derivation of RD of non-adjuncts (including arguments and verbs). In other words, while RD of non-adjuncts are derived via syntactic movement, RD of adjuncts are not. A similar split in RD cases has been reported in Korean RD (Ko 2015). It is possible that RD of adjuncts in Alasha is derived via Late Merge, in a way proposed for Korean RD (Ko 2022b). Since RD of adjuncts appear to be a more specific case in RD, I set aside this sub-type of RD and focus on RD of non-adjuncts for the rest of the paper.

Focusing on RD of non-adjuncts, we have witnessed island sensitivity and long distance dependency in these cases, lending supporting to a movement analysis on Alasha RD. However, it should be noted that these cases do *not* distinguish a bi-clausal analysis from a mono-clausal one. I move on to arguments for a bi-clausal structure in the next section.

## 4.3 Evidence for a bi-clausal structure

### 4.3.1 Imperfect copying and island sensitivity

The first piece of evidence comes from imperfect copying, briefly discussed in section 2. The relevant examples are repeated from (9) below in (38).

(38)  α = an imperfect copy

    a.   Baatar **Huh Sudar**-ig    ons-sen, **Huh Sudar**-ig                   perfect copying

         Baatar "Blue Book"-ACC read-PST "Blue Book"-ACC

         'Baatar read "Blue Book".'

    b.   Baatar **ter**$_i$-ig ons-sen, **Huh Sudar**$_i$-ig                    imperfect copying

         Baatar it-ACC read-PST "Blue Book"-ACC

         'Baatar read it, "Blue Book".'

Examples like (38) have been taken as evidence for a bi-clausal structure in other languages (see, for example, Tanaka 2001; Öztürk 2013). Since the element in the α-position does not correspond to a "gap" in the host clause, it is unlikely to be derived via movement from the host clause - they belong to a separate clause. One caveat, however, is that recent proposals on linearization of movement chains open up an array of possibilities where a movement chain may have multiple realizations of copies. For example, *copies* might be resulted when a chain member escapes Copy Deletion for independent reasons (Nunes 2004; Landau 2006; Trinh 2009; Lee 2021). As for pronouns, they might be derived via partial application of Copy Deletion, which selectively deletes certain features of a nominal (Urk 2018; Georgi and Amaechi 2022; Scott 2021; Yip and Ahenkorah 2023). As such, while the cases in (38) are predicted by a bi-clausal analysis, they do not necessitate such as analysis.

    Here, it is instructive to consider demonstratives in dislocation copying. Consider the sentence in (39), which is minimally different from (38b) in that the pronoun is replaced by a demonostrative-noun string.

(39) ARD disallow imperfect copying with demonstratives

Baatar **ter-nom**<sub>i</sub>-ig    ons-sen, **Huh Sudar**<sub>i</sub>-ig

Baatar that-book-ACC read-PST "Blue Book"-ACC

'Baatar read that book, "Blue Book".'

I suggest that the acceptability of (39) provides stronger evidence for a bi-clausal analysis, since it is less likely, if not impossible, for a proper name and a demonstrative-noun string to be related by movement (and derived via Copy Deletion). In featural terms, the features of the latter is not a subset of the former, unlike the case of pronoun vs. proper name, where the pronoun might be regarded as the partial realization of the D-feature of the proper noun (Yip and Ahenkorah 2023). In contrast, the acceptability of (39) receives a natural explanation under a bi-clausal analysis. Provided that a bi-clausal structure in RD only requires proposition identity, it is possible to have the structure in (40), where the two clauses contain a pair of co-indexing nominals with different morpho-syntactic forms. In other words, the two (overt) nominals are not related by syntactic movement.

(40) The derivation of (39) under a bi-clausal analysis

$[_{CP}$ ... **ter-nom-ig**$_i$ ... $]$ $[_{FocusP/TopicP}$ **Huh Sudar-ig**$_i$ [ ... Huh Sudar$_i$ ig ... ] ]

This explanation is further supported by two additional observations. First, since movement is involved in the second clause, it is predicted that island sensitivity remains in cases of imperfect copying (cf. Tanaka 2001). This is borne out in (41).

(41) Island sensitivity remains in cases of imperfect copying in Alasha

*Baatar [Tsetsege **ter-xun-d**    og-sen] nom-ig    xulgail-sen **Erdin-t**

Baatar Tsetsege that-person-DAT give-PST book-ACC steal-PST    Erdin-DAT

'Baatar stole the book that Tsetsege gave to that person, Erdin.'

Second, if RD in a language involves a mono-clausal structure, it is predicted that such language would disallow demonstratives to occupy the $\alpha$-position. Cantonese is a case in point. The suggestion that Cantonese RD involves a mono-clausal structure is independently argued for in various works by

L. Y.-L. Cheung (1997, 2009), Lee (2017, 2021), and Lai (2019) (setting aside different implementations in these proposals). The unacceptability of (42) indicates that the (im)possibility of demonstratives in the $\alpha$-position is correlated with a mono-/bi-clausal structure in RD.

(42)  CRD disallow imperfect copying with demonstratives

    \***Ni-bun syu**$_i$ jiging zyutbaan-zo laa3 **Hunglaumong**$_i$

    this-CL book already out.of.print-PERF LAA3 "The Dream of Red Chamber"

    'This book is already out of print, "The Dream of Red Chamber".'

### 4.3.2 *Wh*-expressions

In section 3.2.5, we have seen that *wh*-expressions cannot occupy the $\alpha$, which appears to be challenge the suggestion that Alasha RD can host focused elements. The relevant example is repeated from (26) in (43).

(43)  ARD resists *wh*-expressions

    #$\Delta$ Baatar-t nom og-sen be **xen**

       Baatar-DAT book give-PST Q who

    'Who gave (a) book to Baatar?'

Upon closer scrutiny, I argue that this indeed lends support to a bi-clausal analysis of Alasha RD.[10] Under the proposed bi-clausal analysis, the first clause involves a *pro*-form in the $\Delta$ position in (43). The infelicity of (43) can be attributed to the fact that there is no corresponding *pro*-forms for interrogative *wh*-expressions in Alasha. This suggestion is supported by two observations. First, adding an overt pronoun does not rescue the sentence in (43), as shown in (44).

(44)  #**ter** Baatar-t nom og-sen be **xen**

    3SG Baatar-DAT book give-PST Q who

    'He gave (a) book to Baatar, who?'

Second, (43) significantly improves if we add a copy of the *wh*-expression in the host clause. It follows

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10. The argument here builds on Takita (2011) in his discussion on Japanese RD.

from that fact that the sentence in (45) involves no *pro*-form in the host clause. The infelicity of (43) should thus be attributed to the lack of appropriate *pro*-form in the language, instead of, e.g., the focus nature of *wh*-expressions.

(45)  dislocation copying is possible with *wh*-expressions in Alasha

**xen** Baatar-t   nom og-sen   be **xen**

who Baatar-DAT book give-PST Q   who

'Who gave (a) book to Baatar?'

This explanation based on *pro*-form is further corroborated with an observation in Cantonese. The sentences in (46) does not improve with an additional occurrence of the *wh*-expression in the host clause, in contrast with Alasha.[11]

(46)  dislocation copying is not possible with *wh*-expressions in Cantonese

a. ***Bin-bun syu** nei mei   tai   aa3 **bin-bun syu**

which-CL book 2SG not.yet read SFP which-CL book

'Which book haven't you read?'

b. ***Matje** haakcan nei aa3 **matje**?

what   scare   2SG SFP what

'What scares you?'

In other words, *wh*-expressions in Cantonese cannot occupy the $\alpha$-position no matter the form of its correlate. This follows naturally from a mono-clausal analysis on Cantonese RD, one that involves no *pro*-form, and thus removing the "gap" in the host clause does not improve the sentence in a way Alasha does. The infelicity of the sentences in (46) can be attributed to the suggestion that the $\alpha$-position is reserved for topics and defocused elements in the language (Lee 2017, 2020).

---

11. Lai (2019, p.250) reports that the sentence in (i) is acceptable. While two out of five of my consultants accept the sentence in (i), they consistently judge the sentences in (46) to be unacceptable.

(i) %**bingo** sengjat gong daaiwaa aa3 **bingo**?
    who   always tell   lie   SFP who
    'Who always lies?'

### 4.3.3 Informational focus (as in Q-A pairs)

Another important observation reported in section 3.2.5 is that ARD is infelicitous if the $\alpha$-position hosts an informational focus, i.e., an answer to a question, repeated below in (47).

(47)   In response to "Who gave a book to Baatar?"

   #△ Baatar-t      nom   og-sen   **Erdin**

       Baatar-DAT   book   give-PST   Erdin

   'Erdin gave (a) book to Baatar.'

Instead of attributing the infelicity to the focus-resistant nature of the $\alpha$-position (*à la* Kuno 1978; Takami 1995; Takano 2014; Lee 2017, 2020), I follow Abe (2019) and suggest that the infelicity of sentences like (47) receives an explanation under a bi-clausal analysis. More concretely, the sentence in (47) has a structure depicted in (48a) and receives an interpretation given in (48b) (building on the analysis advocated in Abe (2019)).

(48)   a.   $[_{\text{CP}}$ *pro* Baatar-t nom og-sen $]$ $[_{\text{FocusP}}$ **Erdin** $[$ ~~Erdin Baatar-t nom og-sen~~ $]$ $]$

   Focus movement

   b.   $\exists$x [x gave a book to Baatar] & it was Erdin that gave a book to Baatar.

As Abe (2019) points out, RD under a bi-clausal analysis would fail to serve as an answer because "it asserts what the question presupposes, namely the first part of the interpretation just given" (p.4). This provides an alternative explanation to the infelicity of using RD as an answer to a question.

Importantly, this explanation leads us to a prediction that if the element in the $\alpha$-position does not reside in a separate clause, it can serve as a felicitous answer. This prediction is borne out in Hindi. In the exchange in (49), the post-verbal elements in (49b) can felicitously be used to answer the preceding question.

27

(49)  <u>RD in Hindi can serve as an answer</u>          (Simpson and Choudhury 2015, p.540)

a.  A: yeh    zewar-to    bade  sundar   haiN. kis-ne    kis-ko    diya?

    these  jewels-TOP  very  beautiful  are   who-ERG  who-OBJ  gave

    'These jewels are very beautiful. Who gave them to whom?'

b.  B: yeh    zewar  diye  haiN  **gita-ko  ram-ne**.

    these  jewels  gave  are    Gita-OBJ  Ram-ERG

    'Ram gave these jewels to Gita.'

Note, however, that this is not to say that RD with a mono-clausal structure *always* allow the right dislocated elements to be an answer to a *wh*-question. The Cantonese example in (29) is a case in point. It is argued that Cantonese RD particularly involves a process of defocalization, hence its incompatibility (Lee 2017, 2020). I stress that the analysis of the shared incompatibility with answers (or informational focus) should not be taken to depend on a unified analysis of the derivation of RD in Alasha and Cantonese.

### 4.3.4  Arguments against a mono-clausal analysis

As an alternative to a bi-clausal analysis on RD, it has been suggested that RD sentences may involve a mono-clausal structure. Two majors formulations are (i) rightward scrambling, and (ii) double preposing. Both formulations assumes a movement dependency between the elements in the $\alpha$-position and its associating. But I have argued in section 4.3.1 that such an assumption is difficult, if not impossible, to deal with imperfect copying cases like (39), which involve a demonostrative. In what follows, I present further arguments against these two formulations, respectively.

The rightward scrambling approach is suggested in, for example, Simon (1989) and Murayama (1999) for Japanese RD, and Bhatt and Dayal (2007) and Manetta (2012) for Hindi post-verbal elements. Under this approach, the element occupying the $\alpha$-position is derived by a one-step movement from the host clause to the right periphery, which can be regarded as a type of scrambling. This idea is schematically illustrated with a case of object RD in (50).

(50) A rightward scrambling approach to RD
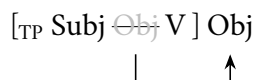
[$_{TP}$ Subj ~~Obj~~ V ] Obj                                      rightward scrambling

However, Alasha RD differs from (leftward) scrambling in allowing resumption.[12] Recall that resumption is possible in Alasha RD (i.e., the right-dislocated element can be associated with a resumptive pronoun). This is shown in the (9b), repeated below in (51a). Importantly, its (leftward) scrambling counterpart is unacceptable, as in (51b).

(51) a. Baatar **ter**$_i$-ig ons-sen, **Huh Sudar**$_i$-ig                        RD

   Baatar it-ACC read-PST "Blue Book"-ACC

   'Baatar read it, "Blue Book".'

   b. ***Huh Sudar**$_i$-ig     Baatar **ter**$_i$-ig ons-sen,            lefward scrambling

   "Blue Book"-ACC Baatar it-ACC read-PST

   '"Blue Book", Baatar read it.'

Furthermore, while possessors can be right dislocated in Alasha RD, they cannot be scrambled, exemplified by the contrast in the sentences in (52).[13]

(52) Asymmeyry between RD and (leftward) scrambling in Alasha

   a. bi [Δ xoir nom]-ig    xar-wa **Baatar-in**                        RD

   I    two book-ACC see-PST Batar-GEN

   'I saw Baatar's two books'

   b. ***Baatar-in** bi [Δ xoir nom]-ig    xar-wa            leftward scrambling

   Batar-GEN I    two book-ACC see-PST

   'I saw Baatar's two books'

These two contrasts between Alasha RD and scrambling suggest that RD in the language should not be conflated with scrambling - they involve different syntactic operations.
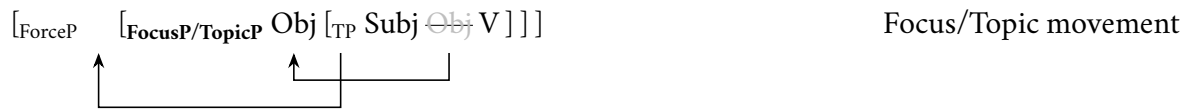
The second formulation of a mono-clausal analysis on RD involves double preposing, suggested

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12. Similar observations are reported in Öztürk (2013) in Khalkha.
13. I thank Yaqing Hu for pointing this contrast to me.

in Lee (2017) and Lai (2019). [14] [15]

(53)   A doubling preposing approach to RD

[$_{ForceP}$   [**$_{FocusP/TopicP}$** Obj [$_{TP}$ Subj ~~Obj~~ V ] ] ]          Focus/Topic movement
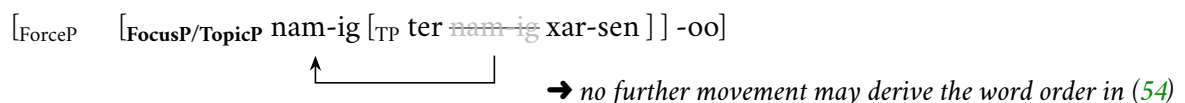
This approach to RD faces a challenge if we take sentence-final particles (SFPs) into consideration. Consider again (2b), repeated below in (54), where the sentence contains the question particle -*oo*.

(54)   Alasha RD with a sentence-final particle

ter   Δ   xar-sen-<u>oo</u>   **nam-ig**

3SG       see-PST-Q   1SG-ACC

'Did he see me?'

Let us assume that the question particle head the Force P. In the attempted derivation depicted in (55), after the Focus/Topic movement of the object, movement of the remnant TP does not deliver the desired word order, since the object ends up preceding the question particle -*oo*. In order to obtain the word order in (54), the string *ter xar-sen-oo* would have to move altogether to a position higher than the FocusP/TopicP; however, the string is not a constituent. As such, a double preposing approach falls short of deriving cases like (54).

(55)   An attempted, halfway derivation of (54) under a double preposing approach

[$_{ForceP}$   [**$_{FocusP/TopicP}$** nam-ig [$_{TP}$ ter ~~nam-ig~~ xar-sen ] ] -oo]

➜ *no further movement may derive the word order in* (54)

A further limitation of this approach concerns the motivation of the second TP movement. Apart from arriving at the desired word order, it is unclear why the TP must move to the Spec ForceP after the first

---

14. In Lee (2017), the two preposing operations are sequential (i.e., the second one involves remnant movement), whereas in Lai (2019) they are simultaneous (creating parallel movement chains). Since the precise implementation of a double preposing approach has no bearing on the discussions here, I abstract away from their differences.

15. I do not discuss the single preposing approaches as proposed in L. Y.-L. Cheung (1997, 2009) and Wei and Li (2018), which either relies heavily on the head-initial property of sentence-final particles, or take advantage of the SVO word order in Chinese languages. Neither of these properties is shared by Alasha.

movement. In contrast, these concerns do not persist in VO/head-initial languages like Cantonese and Mandarin. It has been argued on independent grounds that SFPs in Cantonese and Mandarin occupy a head-initial structure. This is consistent with the head directionality in these languages (at least in the verbal domain). Also, TP movement in these languages is independently required in non-RD sentences, so that TP movement is not parasitic on RD. For space reasons, I do not go further into the arguments for the status of SFPs and the mono-clausal analysis on RD. I refer interested readers to works by Sybesma (1999), Simpson and Wu (2002), L. Y.-L. Cheung (2009), Lee (2017), Lai (2019), and Yip (2020).

# 5  Deriving the variation in the information structure of RD

In this section, I return to the unanswered question raised at the end of section 3: what accounts for the variation in the information structure of RD? Recall the variation that we observe with languages with RD, repeated from (30) in (56).

(56)  <u>Two types of RD languages</u>

    a.   $\alpha$ can host topics/defocused elements only            e.g., Cantonese, Mandarin

    b.   $\alpha$ can host focused elements, and topics/defocused elements   e.g., Mongolian, Japanese

Focusing on focused elements, an alternative way to put the variation in (56) is given in (57).

(57)  <u>Two types of RD languages</u>

    a.   $\alpha$ *cannot* host focused elements             e.g., Cantonese, Mandarin

    b.   $\alpha$ *can* host focused elements               e.g., Mongolian, Japanese

In section 5.1, I take a detour to discuss and argue against an attempt to derive the variation by relating to focused elements by making reference to a mono-/bi-clausal structure on RD. I show that there is no strict correlation between the two. In section 5.2, I propose a structural account on this variation, and suggest that the variation hinges on the different licensing conditions of the Focus Projection in different languages.

## 5.1 Focused elements in RD is not correlated with a bi-clausal structure

I have argued that Alasha RD exhibits two properties: (i) it allows focused elements in $\alpha$, and (ii) it involves a bi-clausal structure. These two properties are shared by Japanese RD: (i) is specifically discussed in Abe (2019), alongside Nakawaga, Asao, and Nagaya (2008), Yamashita (2011), and Takita (2011); and (ii) is defended in Abe (1999), Tanaka (2001), Yamashita (2011), and Abe (2019). In contrast, Cantonese and Mandarin RD exhibit an opposite pattern: (i) it disallows focused elements in $\alpha$, and (ii) it involves a mono-clausal structure (L. Y.-L. Cheung 2009; Lee 2017, 2020, 2021; Chiang 2017; Wei and Li 2018; Lai 2019). These properties are summarized in Table 2.

|                            | Alasha, Japanese | Cantonese, Mandarin |
| -------------------------- | :--------------: | :-----------------: |
| Focused elements in $\alpha$ | ✔                | ✘                   |
| RD analysis                | bi-clausal       | mono-clausal        |

Table 2: A comparison between Asian languages (to be expanded)

Here, it is tempting to suggest a correlation in (58).[16]

(58)   A potential correlation (to be rejected)

Focused elements in RD are only licensed in a bi-clausal structure.

However, the validity of this correlation is questionable if we extend the empirical scope of RD to Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindi and Bangla. On one hand, it is suggested focused elements can appear postverbally in these languages (Dayal 2003; Simpson and Choudhury 2015). This is already illustrated by the Hindi Q-A pair example in (49), and further supported by the Bangla example in (59), which allows the $\alpha$ to host a contrastively focused element.

(59)   Bangla allows contrastive focus in the $\alpha$-position

ami  ram-ke   dekhechi **dilli-te**, hyderabad-e  na.                    (p.540)

I    Ram-OBJ  saw       Delhi-in  Hyderabad-in  NEG

'I saw Ram in Delhi, not in Hyderabad.'

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16. As for Korean RD, Ko (2015) suggests that $\alpha$ can host focus elements (i.e., specificational focus), and she argues for a mono-clausal analysis in Korean RD. If so, Korean represents a counter-example to the correlation in (58). However, the mono-clausal vs. bi-clausal debates in Korean RD remains controversial; see, for an overview, Ko (2022a). I do not count on the Korean case to argue against the validity of (58).

On the other hand, the elements in the $\alpha$-position in these languages is argued to be derived by either rightward scrambling (Bhatt and Dayal 2007; Manetta 2012; Kidwai 2022) or leftward movement of the verb (Simpson and Choudhury 2015). These analyses share the idea that RD sentences in these languages involve a mono-clausal structure, instead of a bi-clausal one. As such, Hindi and Bangla posit a challenge to the potential correlations given in (58). In other words, there is no correlation between focused elements in RD and a mono-/bi-clausal structure involved in RD. Table 3 updates Table 2 by adding Hindi and Bangla to the landscape of RD.

| | Alasha, Japanese | Cantonese, Mandarin | Hindi, Bangla |
|---|---|---|---|
| Focused elements in $\alpha$ | ✔ | ✘ | ✔ |
| RD analysis | bi-clausal | mono-clausal | mono-clausal |

Table 3: A comparison between Asian languages (to be expanded)

## 5.2   The licensing condition of the FocusP

I propose that the variation in the information structure of RD lies elsewhere in the *licensing condition of the Focus Projection*. Recall that under the proposed bi-clausal analysis on Alasha, $\alpha$ can host focused elements because Focus movement in the second clause is possible (in addition to Topic movement).[17] In principle, Cantonese and Mandarin RD might involve the very same Focus movement in a mono-clausal structure, in a way depicted in (60) (which involves a case of object RD). However, we have established that focused elements cannot appear in the $\alpha$-position in these languages, so something must have gone wrong in the attempted derivation in (60).

(60)   An illicit configuration in Cantonese and Mandarin

   *[ForceP   Force [**FocusP** Obj [TP Subj Obj V ] ] ]                    Focus movement
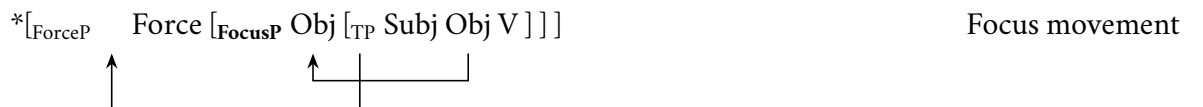
I propose that the issue does not lie solely on Focus movement or on the TP movement, as both of them are independently motivated. I argue that the unacceptability of (60) results from a combination of

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17. This is in line with Japanese RD, as discussed in Abe (2019).

them. Precisely, it is the TP movement subsequent to the Focus movement that is problematic in (60). I attribute the issue to the licensing condition of FocusP. I suggest that the cross-linguistic variation in the information structure of RD is rooted in the licensing parameter of FocusP, with regard to the overt/covert nature of the complement of FocusP, detailed in (61).

(61)   The proposed licensing parameter on the Focus Phrase

    a.   A Focus Phrase is only licensed by *covert* complement        e.g., Alasha, Japanese

    b.   A Focus Phrase is only licensed by *overt* complement        e.g., Cantonese, Mandarin

In other words, (60) is illicit because the TP movement would create a covert complement in the FocusP. In what follows, I elaborate on the licensing condition of FocusP in these two types of languages, respectively.

### 5.2.1   FocusP in Alasha and Japanese

Let us first consider the FocusP in Alasha and Japanese. We have already seen in section 4.3 that the FocusP in Alasha RD allows a covert complement, as deletion occurs in the second clause. The same is also suggested for Japanese RD (Abe 2019). Importantly, the FocusP in these languages do not only *allow* a covert complement, it indeed *requires* a covert complement. This is evidenced by the lack of focus interpretation in (leftward) scrambling. In the scrambling sentences in (62), the scrambled constituents does not bear any focus interpretation.

(62)   Scrambling in Alasha and Japanese (no focus interpretation on scrambled elements)

    a.   [$_{XP}$ **nam-ig** [$_{TP}$ ter  $\Delta$  xar-sen]]        Alasha

        1SG-ACC    3SG    see-PST

        'He saw me.'

    b.   [$_{TP}$ **Mary-ni** [$_{TP}$ John-ga  kinoo  $\Delta$  atta yo]].    Japanese (Abe 2019, p.3)

        Mary-DAT    John-NOM yesterday    saw SFP]]

        'Mary, John saw yesterday.'

The lack of focus interpretation indicates that the scrambled element cannot occupy the specifier of

the FocusP, in a way similar to the second clause in RD. More generally, it implies that the FocusP in Alasha and Japanese is not always available/activated in a sentence, even Focus movement is available in these languages. Schematically, the difference between RD cases with focused elements and scrambling cases like (62a) is that the complement of FocusP in RD is covert, whereas that in scrambling is overt, as shown in (63).

(63) The licit and illicit FocusP in Alasha and Japanese

a.$^{OK}$ ... [$_{FocusP}$   Foc   ~~[$_{TP}$ ... ]~~ ]          (the second clause in) RD

b.   *... [$_{FocusP}$   Foc   [$_{TP}$ ... ] ]                    Scrambling

Building on the suggestion in Abe (2019), I suggest that FocusP in these languages is restricted to contexts where the complement of the FocusP is covert. This delivers the first part of the licensing parameter in (61).

(61) The licensing condition of FocusP in Alasha and Japanese

a.   A Focus Phrase is only licensed by a *covert* complement.


### 5.2.2   FocusP in Cantonese and Mandarin

Turning to Cantonese and Mandarin, they differ from Alasha and Japanese in that leftward movement in matrix clauses can induce focus interpretation (among other discourse functions). The existence of a FocusP is proposed and defended in various works (Shyu 1995; Badan 2007; C. C.-H. Cheung 2015; Pan 2019; Lee 2022, i.a.). I illustrate this point with two Cantonese examples in (64). The sentence in (64a) is a case of *wh*-fronting, which conveys a contrastive reading on the *wh*-expression (C. C.-H. Cheung 2008, 2015). The sentence in (64b) is the verb doubling construction discussed in Cheng and Vicente (2013) and Lee (2022).

(64) Focus movement in Cantonese

a.   [$_{FocusP}$ (Hai) **bingo** [$_{TP}$ Siufan zeoi zungji Δ]] aa?     (C. C.-H. Cheung 2015, p.76)

     HAI   who       Siufan most like      Q

‘Who is it that Siufan likes most?’

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b. [_FocusP (Lin) **tai** [_TP Aaming dou m-**tai** ni-bun syu]] wo4     (Lee 2022, p.60)

    even read     Aaming also not-read this-CL book SFP

    'Aaming didn't even READ this book (to my surprise).'

Crucially, in both cases, the focus particles, namely, *hai* and *lin*, are optional, suggesting that the focus interpretation remains in their absence, and thus it should be attributed to the availability of FocusP instead of to the presence of focus particles. The availability of the focus interpretation in these cases indicates that the FocusP is available in non-elliptical clauses in Cantonese, and, more importantly, it does *not* require a covert complement.

Here, if we assume a stronger restriction on FocusP, namely, FocusP requires an overt complement, we obtain an explanation on why (60), repeated in (65), is illicit.

(65)   An illicit configuration in Cantonese and Mandarin             =(60)

    *[_ForceP   Force [**FocusP** Obj [_TP Subj Obj V ] ] ]         Focus movement

It can be argued that in the second movement step when the TP moves and strands the FocusP, it creates a covert complement in the FocusP, a configuration disallowed in these languages. An explanation along this line naturally derives the observation that focused elements cannot appear in the $\alpha$-position, as they cannot be stranded in RD (i.e., they occur in the specifier of FocusP). Note that no such requirement applies to TopicP, as topics/defocused elements can be right dislocated. Note further that if FocusP moves together with the TP, the sentence becomes acceptable, which would result in cases in (64). Schematically speaking, the licensing of FocusP in Cantonese and Mandarin is a mirror image of what we posted for Alasha and Japanese, illustrated in (66).

(66)   The licit and illicit FocusP in Cantonese and Mandarin

    a.  *... [_FocusP   Foc   ~~[_TP ... ]~~ ]         RD with TP movement

    b.^OK ... [_FocusP   Foc   [_TP ... ] ]         Focus movement

As such, this delivers the second part of the licensing parameter in (61).

(61)   The licensing condition of FocusP in Cantonese and Mandarin

      b.   A Focus Phrase is only licensed by an *overt* complement.

To sum up, I suggested that variation in information structure of RD receives a structural account that builds on the licensing parameter of the FocusP in different languages. FocusP in Alasha and Japanese requires a covert complement, whereas that in Cantonese and Mandarin requires a covert one. The variation of RD is correlated with the (un)availability of focus movement in non-elided, matrix sentences.

### 5.2.3   Residue issues and summary

Before I conclude this paper, there are two worth-noting issues. The first one concerns the licensing condition of FocusP in languages like Hindi and Bangla. I briefly outline a possibility in these languages. Given the discussions in section 5.1, RD in these languages can host focused elements, which acquires the post-verbal position via rightward scrambling in a mono-clausal structure (Bhatt and Dayal 2007; Manetta 2012; Kidwai 2022). If the scrambled elements land in the specifier of FocusP, it can be suggested that FocusP in these languages is compatible with overt complement, unlike Alasha and Japanese, but similar to Cantonese and Mandarin. This suggestion is corroborated by the proposal in Irani (2014) for the presence of FocusP above $v$P in Hindi, and the proposal in Syed (2015) for the availability of the DP-internal FocusP in Bangla. None of them requires the a covert complement in the FocusP. If the discussion here is on the right track, one remaining question is whether FocusP in these languages also tolerates a covert complement. A negative answer would suggest that these languages share the same licensing condition with Cantonese and Mandarin. In contrast, a postive answer would suggest that there is not any specific requirement with regard to the complement.

This brings us to the second issue relating to sluicing.[18] The proposed licensing parameter in (61) leads us to predict a further correlation with sluicing, whose derivation possibly involves both Focus movement and TP ellipsis. In particular, it is predicted that languages whose FocusP is licensed by a covert complement would allow sluicing. This is borne out in Japanese. Fukaya and Hoji (1999)

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18. The validity of the following discussion depends on a correct analysis of sluicing in each of the language under discussion.

and Hiraiwa and Ishihara ([2002](#), [2012](#)), among others, argue for a cleft analysis on embedded sluicing in Japanese, exemplified in ([67](#)). They argue that sentences like ([67](#)) involve Focus movement and a subsequent remnant deletion, stranding the specifier of the FocusP (see also discussions in Abe [2019](#)).[19]

(67)   Embedded sluicing in Japanese                              (Fukaya and Hoji [1999](#))

    a.   John-wa  dareka-ni      atta  rasii  ga,

         TOP          someone-DAT  met  seem  but

         'It seems that John met someone, but, '

    b.   boku-wa  **dare(-ni)**  ka  wakara-nai.

         1SG-TOP  who-DAT  Q  know-not

         'I don't know who'

Another prediction made by the proposed licensing parameter is that languages whose FocusP is licensed by an overt complement should *not* allow sluicing, as the TP ellipsis after Focus movement would create a covert complement in the FocusP. This is indeed borne out in Cantonese and Mandarin. Consider the following two sluicing-like constructions in ([68](#)).

(68)   Sluicing-like constructions in Mandarin and Cantonese

    a.   Zhangsan  kandao  mouren,  danshi  wo  bu  zhidao  *(shi)  **shei**.              Mandarin

         Zhangsan  saw        someone  but    I    not  know    COP    who

         'Zhangsan saw somebody, but I don't know **who**.'              (Li and Wei [2014](#), p.296)

    b.   Aaming  maai-zo  di  je,      daan  ngo  m-zi        *(hai)  **mat**.              Cantonese

         Aaming  buy-PERF  CL  thing  but    I      not-know  COP    what

         'Aaming bought some thing, but I don't know **what**.'

The obligatory presence of the copula verb has been taken as evidence for a non-movement approach defended in Wei ([2004](#), [2011](#)), Adams and Tomioka ([2012](#)), and Li and Wei ([2014](#), [2017](#)). These au-

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19. The picture is more complicated in Alasha, and other Mongolic languages such as Khalkha and Chakhar. Embedded sluicing in Khalkha and Chakhar is argued to involve no movement, due to the lack of case matching effects (Sakamoto [2014](#); Bai [2022](#)). On a relevant note, Sakamoto ([2014](#)) reports that matrix sluicing differs from embedded sluicing in requiring case matching. This implies a non-uniform, movement approach to matrix sluicing in Mongolic languages. I leave further investigations into this issue to another occasion. I thank Xue Bai for comments and discussions about this point.

thors refer to these constructions as *pseudo-sluicing*, and propose that the *wh*-elements in (68) is not the remnant of TP deletion, but a base generated clause containing a predicate with a null subject pro, schematically illustrated in (69). Crucially, the inability to leave out the copula suggests that a movement approach to (68) is unavailable, which follows from the proposed licensing parameter.

(69)   Pseudo-sluicing involves a non-elliptical structure with a base-generated null subject

　　… but I don't know [ *pro   shi/hai   wh*]

As for Hindi and Bangla, Bhattacharya and Simpson (2012) argue that sluicing in these languages similarly involve *wh*-movement and remnant deletion, given the case-matching effects and the absence of copulas.

(70)   Sluicing in Bangla and Hindi　　　　　　　　(Bhattacharya and Simpson 2012, p.191, 196)

a.   karo　　　　rag　　hoeche,　　kintu ami jani　　na **kar**.
　　someone.GEN anger happen.has but　I　know not who.GEN
　　'Someone has become angry, but I don't know who.'

b.   Raam-ne kisi-ko　　　kitaab dii-thii, par mujhe　nahii maluum ki **kis-ko**.
　　Ram-ERG someone-DAT book　give-PST but me.OBL not　know　c who-DAT
　　'Ram gave a book to someone, but I don't know who.'

If the sluices in these examples reside in the FocusP whose complement is deleted, then the FocusP in these languages do not require an overt complement like Cantonese and Mandarin. More generally, given the discussions in the beginning of this subsection, it can be concluded that the overt/covert nature of the complement of the FocusP in Hindi and Bangla does not affect the legitimacy of FocusP. One important remark, however, is that it is questionable whether these languages really have cleft constructions (Bhattacharya and Simpson 2012). In other words, it is unclear whether the sluices must occur the FocusP in the examples. As this deserves a separate discussion on its own, I leave this issue to future research.

Ultimately then, summing up the discussions so far, Table 4 presents a comparison between six Asian languages, classified in three groups, according to the proposed licensing conditions of the Fo-

cusP. In the first group, represented by Alasha and Japanese, the covert complement requirement rules out focus sentences in non-elliptical contexts, but rules in focused elements in RD and sluicing constructions. In the second group, represented by Cantonese and Mandarin, the overt complement requirement establishes a mirror image of the first group, which rules out focused elements in RD and sluicing constructions, but allows focus sentences in non-elliptical contexts. In the last group we have Hindi and Bangla, and they seem to impose no specific requirements on the complement of FocusP, and thus it allows all three constructions under discussions.[20]

| | Alasha, Japanese | Cantonese, Mandarin | Hindi, Bangla |
|---|---|---|---|
| Proposed FocusP licensing | covert complement | overt complement | none |
| Focused elements in $\alpha$ | ✔ | ✘ | ✔ |
| RD structure | bi-clausal | mono-clausal | mono-clausal |
| Non-elliptical focus sentences | ✘ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Sluicing | ✔ | ✘ | ✔ |

Table 4: A comparison between Asian languages (final)

# 6 Conclusions

In this paper, I reported an important property of Alasha RD - Alasha allows focused elements to be right dislocated. This observation contrasts sharply with languages like Cantonese and Mandarin. I first proposed an analytical account on how focused elements may end up in the final position in Alasha. I extended a bi-clausal analysis of RD by suggesting that the second clause involves Focus movement, followed by remnant deletion. Then I developed an account on the variation of the information structure of RD across languages. I attributed the variation to a parametric difference relating to how Focus Projection is licensed in these languages. The proposed parameter is repeated below in (71).

(71)    The proposed licensing parameter on the Focus Phrase

    a.    A Focus Phrase is only licensed by *covert* complement                    e.g., Alasha, Japanese

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20. I have grayed the row of RD structure as it is not correlated with other observations, as discussed in section 5.1.

b. A Focus Phrase is only licensed by *overt* complement       e.g., Cantonese, Mandarin

Ultimately, the findings of this paper strengthen a non-uniform approach to RD in natural languages, despite their surface similarities. In terms of syntactic structure, RD may involve a mono-clausal structure or a bi-clausal structure, subject to language specific properties. In terms of information structure, RD may or may not target focused elements, subject to the proposed parameter on the Focus Phrase.

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