

Defending a biclausal approach to right dislocation

Ka-Fai Yip

Yale University

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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) $\left[\overbrace{\dots (XP_i) \dots \text{SFP}}^{\text{main chunk}} \right] \overbrace{XP_i}^{\text{RD chunk}}$

(3) Gapped right dislocation (GRD)

a. [_ heoi-zo Meigwok laa3] **Aaming.**

[C(antonese)]

b. [_ qu-le Meiguo le] **Xiaoming.**

[M(andin)]

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.*)

Two outstanding issues of Chinese RD

#1 Whether GRD and DC 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)

- Today, I will show that a pursuit of the *biclausal* approach 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

Overview of the talk

- I argue that GRD and DC in Chinese have a *unified biclausal structure*.
- I propose that GRD only differs from DC in the use of *empty categories* in the first clause.

(6) [_iP [_{main} ... {*e*_i / XP_i} ... SFP] [_i' : [_{RD} XP_i [... t_{XP} ...]]]]



(*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

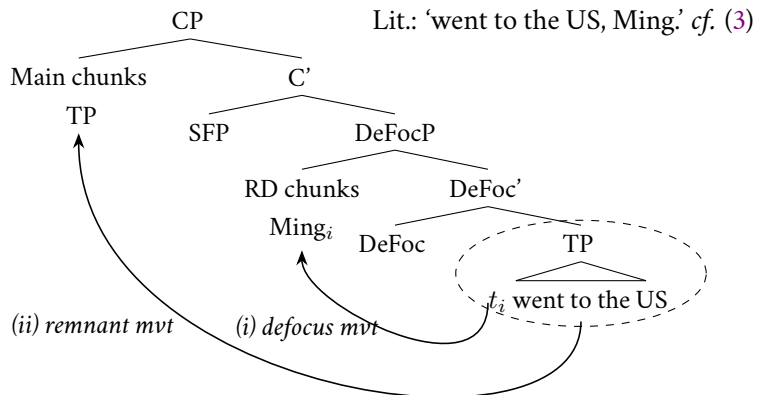
3 The monoclausal vs. biclausal debate

- 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 monoclausal + movement approach to RD (adopted from T. T.-M. Lee 2017)



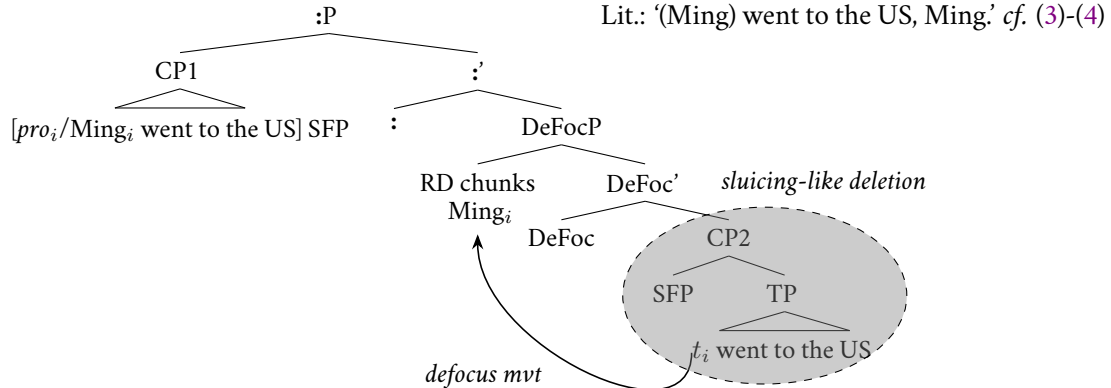
T. T.-M. Lee 2017's analysis (coupled with T. T.-M. Lee 2021) is chosen since it has the maximal derivative power, but the counter-arguments presented today apply to all variants of the monoclausal approach.

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)

(16) The biclausal + sluicing approach to RD



:P forms specifying coordination

→ captures a traditional idea that RD chunks are “extensions” of the main chunks (e.g., Shi 1992)

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:

- (17) a. $[_{CP} [_{TP} t_{XP} YP] [SFP [XP_{RD} \dots t_{TP}]]]$ Monoclausal: $(XP-)YP-SFP-XP$
b. $[_{CP1} (XP1) YP SFP] [_{CP2} XP2_{RD} [\dots t_{XP2} YP SFP]]$ 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):

(18) Imperfect copying

a. 噉佢_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:

(19) [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)

- (20) a. [CP [TP <[DP D [~~[NP 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:

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

a. 嗰架紅色嘅跑車死咗火吓嘛嗰架野

[_{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 (21).

(22) [_{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 monoclausal (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:

(24) 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 **impossible**

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

(25) a. Monoclausal approach predicts that licenser can be right-dislocated with a gap

[_{CP} [_{TP} ... t_i ... licensee ...] [_{SFP} [**licenser**_{*i*} ... t_{TP}]] (licensers reconstruct to 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.

(26) 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).

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

a. *佢乜野想食架都

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

3SG what want eat SFP DOU

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

b. *誰會來嗎都?

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

who will come SFP DOU

'Will everyone come?'

[M]

(28) Universal *wh*-licensing in DC

a. 佢乜野都想食架乜野都

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

3SG what DOU want eat SFP what DOU

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

[C] b. 誰都會來嗎誰都?

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

who DOU will come SFP who DOU

'Will everyone come?'

[M]

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):

(29) 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)
- (29) requires reconstruction in the *RD* chunk for quantification
- (27) 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)

(30) Asymmetries in reconstruction

- a. * $[_{CP1} \dots \underline{wh} \dots SFP] [_{CP2} \mathbf{dou}_k [\dots \underline{wh} \boxed{t_k} \dots]]$ (No licensers in CP1)
- b. $[_{CP1} \dots \underline{DP_{plural}} \dots SFP] [_{CP2} \mathbf{dou}_k [\dots \underline{DP_{plural}} \boxed{t_k} \dots]]$ (*dou* reconstructs in CP2)

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

(32) 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

(see handout)

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)

(40) 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_O laa1.

1SG also have SFP

'I also have (a Mac).'

b. 我都有啦mac機

[_{CP1} Ngo dou jau e_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)

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

- a. 今日星期日咁嘛
 Gamjat *e_{COP}* singkeijat aa3.
 today Sunday SFP
 ‘Today is Sunday.’
- b. 今日星期日咁嘛係
 [CP1 Gamjat *e_{COP}* singkeijat aa3] [CP2 **hai**]. (GRD)
 today Sunday SFP COP
 ‘Today is Sunday.’

(42) 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}?
 [CP1 Zhangsan *e_V* SAN-ge pingguo ma] [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.

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

- a. $[_{CP1} e_S V O SFP] [_{CP2} S [\dots]]$ (Empty subject)
- b. $[_{CP1} S V e_O SFP] [_{CP2} O [\dots]]$ (Empty object)
- c. $[_{CP1} S e_V O SFP] [_{CP2} V [\dots]]$ (Empty verb)
- d. $[_{CP1} S V O SFP] [_{CP2} X(P) [\dots]]$ (No empty categories)

(44) 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 DC 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

(45) [_P [_{main} ... {*e*_i / XP_i} ... SFP] [_{RD} XP_i [... *t*_{XP} ...]]]]]



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