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# A unified biclausal approach to right dislocation in Chinese\*

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## Abstract

This paper sets out to settle the debate on the clausal structure of right dislocation (RD) in Chinese. In RD, elements are displaced to the right of the sentence, either leaving a gap (gapped right dislocation, GRD) or a correlate (dislocation copying, DC). Despite remarkable structural similarities, GRD is often analyzed as having a monoclausal structure and DC as having a biclausal structure. Drawing on novel evidence from Cantonese and Mandarin, this paper argues that a non-uniform treatment is unwarranted and both GRD and DC are biclausal. It is proposed that GRD and DC share a unified syntax involving two underlying clauses, where the second one involves movement and deletion. The difference between GRD and DC is in the use of empty categories, which are abundant in Chinese but whose role has been largely unaddressed in previous studies of RD. I show that properties of empty categories in the first clause capture different variants of GRD as well as a typological correlation between null arguments and GRD. I also carefully review previous challenges to biclausality and demonstrate that none of them hold empirically or conceptually. The findings allow for a simpler yet empirically more adequate grammar of RD in Chinese, and moreover support a uniform view on RD across languages.

**Keywords:** Right dislocation, Copying, Biclausal approach, Empty categories, Sluicing, Cantonese, Mandarin

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# 1 Introduction

Right dislocation (henceforth RD) refers to the phenomenon where some elements are displaced or “copied” to the right of a sentence, commonly found in colloquial speech. In Chinese (including Cantonese and Mandarin), when sentence-final particles (SFPs) are present, the displaced/copied elements must follow the SFPs (Cheung 2009a, 2015). These constructions are sometimes referred to as “afterthoughts” (Chao 1968) or “incremental sentences” (Luke 2004). The general schema is illustrated in (1), using pre-theoretical terms “main chunks” and “RD chunks” for the two parts.<sup>1</sup>

$$(1) \quad \underbrace{[ \dots (XP_i) \dots \text{SFP} ]}_{\text{main chunk}} \quad \underbrace{XP_i}_{\text{RD chunk}}$$

Two examples of displacement and copying of subjects are exemplified in (2) and (3), respectively. I refer to cases like (2) as gapped right dislocation (GRD) and (3) as dislocation copying (DC).<sup>2</sup>

(2) 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.’

(3) Dislocation copying (DC)<sup>3</sup>

- 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!’

1. Wei and Li (2018) distinguish RD from afterthoughts, as the latter may receive stress and allow an SFP at the end, as in (i). Afterthoughts also differ from RD in lacking island sensitivity (Ott and de Vries 2016). This paper takes the obligatory sentence-medial position of SFPs as the defining property of RD in Chinese, and sets aside the afterthought cases.

(i) [ Wo mai-le ding maozi ], nizi-de (ne). (afterthought) [M]  
     1SG buy-PFV CL hat woolen SFP  
     Lit.: ‘I bought a hat, woolen.’ (adapted from Wei and Li 2018:274)

2. Mandarin examples are transcribed in *pinyin*, and Cantonese examples are transcribed in *Jyutping* (the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong Cantonese Romanization Scheme in 1993). Tones are only represented when necessary. Abbreviations that are not in the Leipzig Glossing Rules: CL=classifier; EXP=experiential aspect; SFP=sentence-final particle. The data in this paper were collected from the literature, Internet, and daily conversation, with the rest constructed by the author. The judgment of Cantonese examples was confirmed with 4 other native speakers from Hong Kong (some with 7 and some with 12), and that of Mandarin examples was confirmed with 5 speakers from Mainland China and 4 speakers from Taiwan. The data were confirmed in online and in-person interview sessions during 2024-2025 with a naturalness scale from 1-5.

3. In colloquial speech, DC is usually accompanied with an “intensifying effect” of the illocutionary force (Meng 1982; Chen 2016), often with a stress in the main chunk. See fn.9 for the functions of DC.

In GRD, the main chunk has a gap that is interpreted using the description in the RD chunk. In DC, there is a correlate of the RD chunk in the main chunk, which may be identical in form or distinct, such as a resumptive pronoun (Cheung 2015).

On a typological note, many languages disallow GRD with an argumental gap like (2), such as Dutch and German (Ott and de Vries 2016). These languages also disallow null arguments, as opposed to languages like Japanese and Korean where both null arguments and GRD are allowed (Tanaka 2001; Park and Kim 2009). Chinese falls into the latter group. This correlation will play a major role in this paper.

While Chinese RD has been discussed in relation to a number of theoretical issues (e.g., (de)focus, linearization, head-directionality of SFPs; see Cheung 2009a; T. T.-M. Lee 2017, 2021a; Lai 2019), there are some fundamental questions that have not been settled. Two major ones are whether GRD and DC should receive a uniform treatment, and whether they underlyingly consist of one clause or two. Most previous studies in the generative framework only focus on one construction, with GRD proposed as having a monoclausal structure with movement (Cheung 2009a; T. T.-M. Lee 2017, *i.a.*) and DC having a biclausal structure with ellipsis/slucing (Cheung 2015; Tang 2018b, *i.a.*), despite the general consensus on unification in work conducted in traditional grammar and other frameworks (e.g., Shi 1992; Luke 2004). It was not until recently that generative attempts towards unification have been made, with a monoclausal structure (Lai 2019; T. T.-M. Lee 2021a).<sup>4</sup>

This paper argues for a uniform *biclausal* approach to RD in Cantonese and Mandarin, with a special focus on the role of *empty categories* in GRD. In §2, I synthesize previous studies and demonstrate that GRD and DC share a number of similarities that warrant unification. I then offer a series of novel arguments for a biclausal structure of GRD and DC, and against previous monoclausal analyses in §3. Borrowing insights from Cheung (2015) and Ott and de Vries (2016), I propose in §4 that the two chunks are asymmetrically coordinated by a specifying conjunction : (colon) (Koster 2000; de Vries 2006, 2009). This captures a traditional idea that RD chunks are “extensions” of the main chunks (e.g., Shi 1992). The RD chunks have an underlying clausal structure involving movement and deletion, whereas the main chunks are clauses either with empty categories (GRD) or without (DC). A preview of the analysis is given in (4).

$$(4) \quad [{}_{:P} [{}_{\text{main}} \dots \{e_i / XP_i\} \dots \text{SFP}] [{}_{:} : [{}_{\text{RD}} XP_i [ \dots t_{XP} \dots ] ] ] ] ] ]$$

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

In §5, I comprehensively review all major challenges to RD’s biclausality and demonstrate that they either do not hold empirically, or can be derived from, and in turn strengthen, the proposed biclausal approach. Ultimately, the findings in this paper allow for a simpler grammar of RD by reducing the difference between GRD and DC to independently motivated empty categories, which are ubiquitous in Chinese (Huang 1982 *et seq.*).

4. Tang (2018b) also suggests a unification, but he does not explicitly mention how GRD is handled.

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## 2 Overview of right dislocation in Chinese

### 2.1 The parallel between GRD and DC

Let us begin with an overview of RD in Chinese. I will show that the four core properties reported for GRD in the literature are also observed for DC: (i) flexible constituency, (ii) movement, (iii) root phenomenon status, and (iv) defocus. The striking parallel motivates a need to unify the two variants analytically. Examples will be drawn primarily from the literature for as an overview, with occasional extension.<sup>5</sup> The novel empirical contribution is mainly in §3.

The first prominent property of GRD and DC is that they appear at first glance to not respect constituency, in both main chunks and RD chunks. In (5), the RD chunks consist of a subject and a modal or an adverb, a non-constituent. This is true for GRD and DC in both languages (Cheung 2009a, 2015; Chan 2016; Chen 2016).

#### (5) Non-constituents in RD chunks in GRD and DC

- a. [ \_ maai jat-bou dinnou aa3 ] **keoi wui.** V-O-SFP-S-Mod [C]  
buy one-CL computer SFP 3SG will  
'He will buy a computer.' (Cheung 2009a:200)
- b. [ **Nin dagai** bu-dao wushi ba ] **nin dagai?** S-Adv-V-O-SFP-S-Adv [M]  
2SG probably not-reach 50 SFP 2SG probably  
'I guess you probably haven't reached age 50?' (Shi 1992:168)

Non-constituents are also found in main chunks, as uncovered by T. T.-M. Lee (2017) for Cantonese and documented in earlier work on Mandarin RD (Lu 1980; Shi 1992). Two major cases fall under this type: GRD of verbs such as (6a), with a subject-object string in the main chunk; and GRD of objects such as (6b), leaving a subject-verb string.<sup>6</sup>

#### (6) Non-constituents in main chunks in GRD

- a. [ Wo \_ ziji qu yi-tang (a) ] **zhunbei.** S-O-(SFP)-V [M]  
1SG self go one-round SFP prepare  
'I plan to go there once by myself.' (Lu 1980:58, SFP a added)
- b. [ Keoi jau-mou maai \_ aa3 ] **gaa ce?** S-V-SFP-O [C]  
3SG have-not.have buy SFP CL car  
'Has s/he bought the car?' (T. T.-M. Lee 2017:60)

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5. Unless specified otherwise, examples utilize the following notation for expository purposes: [bracketing] for main chunks, underscores ( \_ ) for gaps, **boldface** for RD chunks and their correlates. Commas are not added unless for a pause, which is often absent in RD.

6. As correctly pointed out by a reviewer, Taiwan Mandarin does not allow verb GRD, also confirmed by my 4 Taiwan Mandarin consultants. My 5 Mainland Mandarin consultants, on the other hand, accepted (6a) even without SFPs. I address this dialectal variation in §4.2 and the issue on SFPs in §5.3, respectively. I am very grateful to the reviewer for this important observation.

Cases of verb DC are also attested (T. T.-M. Lee 2021a), as in the following “imperfect/partial copying” case (see §5.5 for object DC):

- (7) [Keoi \_ **heoi** Meigwok aa3 ] **wui heoi**. S-V-O-SFP-Mod-V [C]  
 3SG go US SFP will go  
 ‘S/he will go to the US.’

Second, right-dislocated elements exhibit canonical properties of movement in GRD and DC. The possibility of RD is constrained by the surface structure of the main chunks. First, the gap/correlate can be embedded:<sup>7,8</sup>

- (8) a. [ ngo zi [CP ZS \_ maai-zo bou soenggei] aa3 ] **hai dinnouzit**. (GRD) [C]  
 1SG know ZS buy-PFV CL camera SFP at computer.festival  
 ‘I know ZS bought a/the camera at the Computer Festival.’ (T. T.-M. Lee 2017:64)
- b. [ Wo zhidao [CP **ni** gan-ma ] ne ] **ni!** (DC) [M]  
 1SG know 2SG do-what SFP 2SG  
 Lit.: ‘I know what you have done, you!’ (Meng 1982:175)

Nonetheless, the gap/correlate cannot be contained in an island, as schematized in (9):

- (9) \*<sub>[main ... [island ... { \_i/ XP<sub>i</sub> } ... ] ... SFP ]</sub> <sub>[RD XP<sub>i</sub> ]</sub>

This constraint is general to all kinds of islands, including complex NP islands, adjunct islands, subject islands, coordinated structures, etc. (Cheung 2015; Chen 2016; Chiang 2017; T. T.-M. Lee 2017; Lai 2019). One example of GRD and one example of DC are given in (10).

- (10) The gap/correlate of RD chunks cannot be in an island

- a. \*[ ZS [CP janwai \_ maai-zo dinnou ] soji mou cin sikfaan lo1 ] **jung jingam**.  
 ZS because buy-PFV computer so no money eat SFP with cash  
 Int.: ‘Because ZS bought a computer with cash, he has no money for meal.’  
 (GRD, Adjunct island; T. T.-M. Lee 2017:65) [C]
- b. \*[ Women tingshuo-le [DP [CP **ta** taopao ] de xiaoxi ] (a) ] **ta!** (DC, CNPI) [M]  
 1PL hear-PFV 3SG escape DE news SFP 3SG  
 Int.: ‘We heard the news that he escaped.’ (Chen 2016:71, SFP *a* added)

Third, both GRD and DC cannot be embedded or subordinated, and thus are a type of root phenomena. T. T.-M. Lee (2017) first points out this fact for Cantonese GRD as in (11a). Notice that the sentence does not improve even with an SFP *ge3* before the RD chunk, although *ge3* itself can be embedded (Tang 2000). I extend this observation to Mandarin in (11b).

7. Generally, SFPs may be divided into at least two types: embeddable and non-embeddable (inter vs. outer SFPs in Tang 1998; also CP-edge vs.  $\nu$ P-edge SFPs in Erlewine 2017a). Both SFPs in (8) are non-embeddable and belong to the matrix clauses. For Cantonese *aa3* in (8a), see Sybesma and Li (2007), Tang (2015b), and C.-m. Lau (2019); for Mandarin *ne* that indicates attitude in (8b) ( $\neq$  continuation *ne* or question *ne*), see Paul (2014) and V. J. Pan (2019).

8. For Beijing Mandarin speakers, (8b) with a certain intonation means ‘How the hell would I know what you have done?!’

(11) GRD cannot be embedded

- a. \*Ngo zi [CP [ ZS \_ heoi tai hei (ge3)] **soeng**] lo1. [C]  
1SG know ZS go watch movie SFP want SFP  
Int.: 'I know ZS wants to go to see a movie.' (T. T.-M. Lee 2017:62; *ge3* added)
- b. \*Wo zhidao [CP [\_ qu kan dianying (le)] **Zhangsan**] a. [M]  
1SG know go watch movie SFP Zhangsan SFP  
Int.: 'I know that Zhangsan went to watch a movie (already).'

I also observe a parallel pattern for DC. This is illustrated by the failure of adverbial subordination in (12), with a low SFP *laa3/le* that can be embedded elsewhere (Tang 1998; Paul 2014).

(12) DC cannot be subordinated

- a. \*[CP Jyugwo [ **Siuming** heoi Meigwok laa3 ] **Siuming** ], ngo zau heoi wan keoi. [C]  
b. \*[CP Ruguo [ **Xiaoming** qu Meiguo le ] **Xiaoming** ], wo jiu qu zhao ta. [M]  
if Ming go US SFP Ming 1SG then go find 3SG  
Int.: 'If Ming went to the US, I will go find him.'

Lastly, concerning the interpretation, RD chunks in GRD and DC are always defocused. I follow Rooth (1992) and Krifka (2008) and conceive of “focus” as triggering a set of alternatives rather than as new information. Examples include contrastive and corrective foci, exclusive focus, cleft focus, ‘even’ focus, interrogative *wh*-phrases and congruent answers to them, among others. They are all prohibited in RD chunks (T. T.-M. Lee 2017, 2020, 2023; Cheung 2009a, 2015, *i.a.*), as in (13) for Cantonese. I also provide a Mandarin case in (14).<sup>9</sup>

(13) Exclusive focus is banned in RD chunks in GRD and DC [C]

- ??[[\_/ **zinghai ngo**] maai-zo ni-bun syu zaa3 ] **zinghai ngo**.  
only 1SG buy-PFV this-CL book SFP only 1SG  
Int.: 'Only I bought this book.' (T. T.-M. Lee 2023, ex.18)

(14) 'Even' focus is banned in RD chunks in GRD and DC [M]

- \*[[\_/ **Lian shi**] ta ye chi a ] **lian shi**!  
even shit 3SG also eat SFP even shit  
Int.: 'S/he even eats shit!'

Given the consistent similarities between GRD and DC, a uniform treatment is desirable. Below, I turn to the debate on whether RD is monoclausal or biclausal.

9. DC is pragmatically different from GRD in having a “minor emphasis” (Cheung 2015:263). As suggested by Cheung, DC concerns the speaker’s assumptions about whether the hearer may integrate the expressed information into the common ground. This is different from the notion of focus adopted here (i.e., grammatically introducing alternatives). For other functions of DC, see Chan (2016) for Cantonese and Chen (2016) for Mandarin.

## 2.2 The monoclausal vs. biclausal debate

RD in Chinese has received a number of formal proposals, with a major point of disagreement being the assumed clausal structure, as listed below. For work couched in non-generative framework, see the overview in Tang (2018b).

- (15) a. *Monoclausal* approach (Packard 1986; Siu 1986; Cheung 1997, 2005, 2009a, 2011; Law 2003; Chiang 2017, 2022; T. T.-M. Lee 2017, 2021a, 2021b, 2022, 2023, 2024; Wei and Li 2018; Lai 2019; Yip 2020)
- b. *Biclausal* approach (Cheung 2015; Tang 2015a, 2018b; Chan 2016; Chen 2016; Dong 2018)

The core claim of the monoclausal approach is that RD consists of *one* clause, and the two chunks are *derivationally related*: either main chunks are moved out from RD chunks, or both chunks involve movement. Committing to leftward movement, this view often assumes that SFPs are underlyingly head-initial (see, e.g., Simpson and Wu 2002; Paul 2014; V. J. Pan 2022). For example, T. T.-M. Lee (2017)’s account involves two movement steps, as illustrated for subject GRD below.<sup>10</sup>

- (16) T. T.-M. Lee (2017)’s monoclausal approach (S-)VP-SFP-S
- a.  $[_{FocP} Foc-\emptyset [_{CP} SFP [_{DeFocP} S_{[-Foc]} [_{DeFoc-\emptyset} [_{TP} t_S VP ] ] ] ] ] ]$  *defocus mvt. in RD chunks*
- b.  $[_{FocP} [_{TP} t_S VP ] [_{Foc-\emptyset} [_{CP} SFP [_{DeFocP} S_{[-Foc]} [_{DeFoc-\emptyset} t_{TP} ] ] ] ] ] ] ]$  *remnant TP mvt. to main chunks*

Coupled with multiple copy pronunciation (T. T.-M. Lee 2021a), DC can also be captured by (16) to give S-VP-SFP-S (i.e., the subject trace is pronounced as a full copy).<sup>11</sup>

The biclausal approach instead assumes that the two chunks are *two* clauses, which are *base-generated* on their own. SFPs can underlyingly be either head-initial or head-final. There is no “cross-

10. T. T.-M. Lee (2017) adopts the split-CP hypothesis and uses FP\* for projections headed by SFPs. Throughout this paper, I abstract away from the differences and use the label CP.

11. For completeness, two other major accounts, Cheung (2009a) and Lai (2019), are represented here. Cheung’s account of GRD involves a one-step movement as in (i). Lai’s account of DC involves parallel movement of TP to SpecCP and SpecGivenP (similar to Lee’s DeFocP), where the lower TP undergoes a “DC-specific” in-situ deletion as in (ii). Note that Lai’s account on GRD is largely the same as T. T.-M. Lee 2017’s (see Lai 2019:270).

- (i) Cheung (2009a)’s focus movement VP-SFP-S
- $[_{FocP} VP [_{Foc-\emptyset} [_{CP} SFP [_{TP} S t_{VP} ] ] ] ] ]$  *focus mvt. to main chunks*
- (ii) Lai (2019)’s parallel copying S-VP-SFP-S
- $[_{CP} [_{TP} S VP ] [_{SFP} [_{GivenP} [_{TP} S \cancel{VP} ] ] ] ] ] ] ]$  *parallel mvt. + deletion*

Yet, both proposals are too restricted. Cheung (2009a) faces difficulties in deriving non-constituents in GRD’s main chunks (as well as DC), whereas Lai (2019) fails to derive DC cases involving verb and/or adverbials alone. For more discussion, see §5. Since the primary goal of this paper is to settle the clausality debate, I choose T. T.-M. Lee (2017)’s proposal (coupled with T. T.-M. Lee 2021a for DC) as the monoclausal representative, which has the maximal derivative power.

chunk” movement, though the RD chunk may involve movement internally. A representative is Cheung (2015)’s sluicing account for DC, with four steps. Take subject DC as an illustration:<sup>12</sup>

- (17) Cheung (2015)’s biclausal approach S-VP-SFP-S
- a.  $[\text{CP}_1 \text{ SFP } [\text{TP}_1 \text{ S VP}]], \quad [\text{CP}_2 \text{ SFP } [\text{TP}_2 \text{ S VP}]]$  *juxtaposition of 2 “parallel” CPs*
- b.  $[\text{CP}_1 \text{ SFP } [\text{TP}_1 \text{ S VP}]], \quad [\text{CP}_2 \text{ SFP } [\text{TP}_2 \text{ S } \cancel{\text{VP}}]]$  *VP ellipsis in TP2*
- c.  $[\text{CP}_a \text{ } \uparrow \text{ [TP}_1 \text{ S VP} ] \downarrow [\text{CP}_1 \text{ SFP } t_{\text{TP}_1}], [\text{CP}_b \text{ } \uparrow \text{ [TP}_2 \text{ S } \cancel{\text{VP}} ] \downarrow [\text{CP}_2 \text{ SFP } t_{\text{TP}_2}]]$  *TP mvt. in both CPs*
- d.  $[\text{CP}_a \text{ S VP SFP}], \quad [\text{CP}_b \text{ } \uparrow \text{ [TP S } \cancel{\text{VP}} ] \downarrow [\text{CP}_2 \text{ SFP } t_{\text{TP}_2}]]$  *CP2 deletion, i.e., sluicing*

While Cheung (2015) focuses primarily on DC and does not discuss how to analyze GRD, it can be derived, as will be proposed, with empty categories in CP1. Thus, both monoclausal and biclausal approaches can handle the shared properties between GRD and DC, and more empirical data are needed to settle the debate.

### 3 Evidence for a biclausal structure

In this section, I offer five novel pieces of evidence in support of a biclausal structure for RD. The first one concerns the copying in DC (§3.1), and the following three suggest that the main chunks have no derivational relationship with the RD chunks, in both GRD and DC (§3.2-3.4). The last one focuses on how SFP word order is derived (§3.5). To facilitate the discussion, I represent the competing structures as follows, abstracting away from minute differences among previous proposals.

- (18) a.  $[\text{CP } [\text{TP } t_{\text{XP}} \text{ YP} ] [\text{SFP } [\text{XP}_{\text{RD}} \dots t_{\text{TP}}]]]$  Monoclausal: (XP-)YP-SFP-XP
- b.  $[\text{CP}_1 (\text{XP}_1) \text{ YP SFP} ] [\text{CP}_2 \text{ XP}_{2\text{RD}} [ \dots t_{\text{XP}_2} \text{ YP SFP} ] ]$  Biclausal: (XP-)YP-SFP-XP

#### 3.1 Imperfect copying

The first argument comes from “imperfect copying” (Cheung 2015), a variant of DC in which the RD chunk is distinct from its correlate in the main chunk. This is illustrated in (19a), where the two elements are completely different in form (pronoun vs. lexical NP) yet co-indexed, and (19b), where only some elements are identical (i.e., “partial copying”).

12. Another influential account is Tang (2015a, 2018b)’s generalized coordination, where two chunks are conjoined by a silent coordinator (indicated as F), as in (i). Unlike Cheung, Tang only posits a simple deletion operation in RD chunks without movement, which falls short of capturing the island sensitivity discussed above.

- (i) Tang (2015a, 2018b)’s generalized coordination S-VP-SFP-S  
 $[\text{FP } [\text{CP}_1 \text{ S VP SFP} ] [\text{F } [\text{CP}_2 \text{ S } \cancel{\text{VP}}]]]$  *coordination + deletion*



(19) Imperfect copying

- a. Gam **keoi<sub>k</sub>** zau-m-zau hou nei **Faatgwok-lou<sub>k</sub>**? [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. **Ta<sub>k</sub>** lai-le ma **ta<sub>k</sub> xianzai**? [M]  
3SG arrive-PFV SFP 3SG now  
'Has he arrived, (he) now?' (Shi 1992:176)

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

- (20) [CP [TP <XP> ... ] [SFP [<XP> ... t<sub>TP</sub>]]] (<> = movement copies)

An alternative is to adopt *partial* Copy Deletion to delete only part of the lower copy (=trace) (Nunes 2004), as in (21). (19a) is captured if phonological features are Late Inserted (as in Distributed Morphology), and if the D head surviving deletion is spelled out as a pronoun (see, e.g., van Urk 2018; Yip and Ahenkorah 2023).

- (21) a. [CP [TP <[<sub>DP</sub> D [<sub>NP</sub> French guy]]>=S/he ...] [SFP [<[<sub>DP</sub> D [<sub>NP</sub> French guy]]> ... t<sub>TP</sub>]]]  
b. [CP [TP <S/he now> has arrived] [SFP [<s/he now> ... t<sub>TP</sub>]]]

This approach, however, faces difficulties in cases involving non-identical RD chunks that cannot be “put back” to the main chunks, such as (22)–(23). The RD chunk is an epithet of the corresponding material in the main chunk.

(22) Imperfect copying that lacks a monoclausal source in Cantonese

- a. [<sub>DP</sub> **Go-gaa** [<sub>NP</sub> **hungsik-ge paauce**]]<sub>i</sub> sei-zo fo aa1maa3 [<sub>DP</sub> **go-gaa** [<sub>NP</sub> **je**]]<sub>i</sub>!  
that-CL red-GE sport.car die-PFV fire SFP that-CL thing  
Lit.: ‘That red sport car stalled, that thing!’
- b. [<sub>DP</sub> **Go-gaa** [<sub>NP</sub> **hungsik-ge (\*je) paauce (\*je)**]]  
that-CL red-GE thing sport.car thing

(23) Imperfect copying that lacks a monoclausal source in Mandarin

- a. [<sub>DP</sub> **Zhe-ge** [<sub>NP</sub> **laoshi**]]<sub>i</sub> gei-le wo lingfen a, [<sub>DP</sub> **zhe-ge** [<sub>NP</sub> **silaoitaipo**]]<sub>i</sub>!  
this-CL teacher give-PFV 1SG zero.score SFP this-CL damn.old.woman  
Lit.: ‘This teacher gave me zero, this damn old woman!’
- b. [<sub>DP</sub> **Zhe-ge (\*silaoitaipo)** [<sub>NP</sub> **laoshi (\*silaoitaipo)**]]  
this-CL damn.old.woman teacher damn.old.woman

In both (b) examples, the epithet and its correlate do not form a licit constituent, suggesting that the RD chunk in (a) examples must originate from a different clause:

- (24) a. [CP<sub>1</sub> That red sport car<sub>i</sub> stalled SFP ] [CP<sub>2</sub> that thing<sub>i</sub> [ ... ] ]  
 b. [CP<sub>1</sub> This teacher<sub>i</sub> gave me zero SFP ] [CP<sub>2</sub> this damn old woman<sub>i</sub> [ ... ] ]

Such examples are not rare in spontaneous speech. For instance, (25) involves a change in the choice of classifiers (*tou* vs. *bou*), whereas (26) involves a change in degree modification (*hou* ‘very’ vs. *jyut* ‘more’).

- (25) **Go-tou** dou hou ging      gaa **go-bou** hei. [C]  
 that-CL also very awesome SFP that-CL movie  
 ‘The movie is also awesome.’ (Cheung 2015:272, corpus example)

- (26) Houci **hou mun** aa3 **go-ceon jyut tai jyut**. [C]  
 seem very boring SFP that-CL more watch more  
 Lit.: ‘(It) seems very boring, the more I watch the show.’ (Daily conversation)

One may object that these cases could be afterthoughts (fn. 1). Yet, RD chunks in imperfect copying are still sensitive to islands like (27), showing that they are genuine RD.

- (27)\*[Janwai [go-gaa hungsik-ge paauce]<sub>i</sub> sei-zo fo], keoidei sin cidou aa1maa3 [go-gaa je]<sub>i</sub>!  
 because that-CL red-GE sport.car die-PFV fire 3PL then late SFP that-CL thing  
 Int.: ‘Because that red sport car stalled, so they were late, that thing!’ [C]

Another objection could be that RD is a non-uniform phenomenon, and it is only imperfect copying that has a biclausal structure. Below, I provide evidence that even other RD variants are biclausal.

### 3.2 Absence of licensers/binders

The second argument concerns disruption of licensing/binding relations in RD. Consider licensing of non-interrogative *wh*-words and NPIs first. Adopting a monoclausal structure that allows reconstruction of the moved elements, a licenser can be right-dislocated and leave a gap (=GRD).<sup>13</sup> The licensing is achieved through reconstruction of the licenser. In contrast, a biclausal analysis rules that out when there are no empty counterparts of the relevant licensers in CP1. These opposite predictions are schematized in (28).

- (28) a. Monoclausal approach predicts that licenser can be right-dislocated with a gap  
 [CP [TP ...  $t_i$  ... licensee ... ] [SFP [licenser<sub>i</sub> ... t<sub>TP</sub>] ] (licensers reconstruct to  $t_i$ )  
 b. Biclausal approach predicts that licensers cannot be right-dislocated with a gap  
 \* [CP<sub>1</sub> ... licensee ... SFP ] [CP<sub>2</sub> licenser<sub>i</sub> [... t<sub>i</sub> ... ] ] (no licensers in CP1)

13. This is a reasonable prediction since other constructions that have been argued to involve remnant movement, such as *v*/VP topicalization in German (Ott 2018) and *v*/VP fronting in Mandarin (Huang 1993), also allow reconstruction.

*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.*), as in (29). Assuming that there are no (base-generated) empty adverbs, this case serves as a testing ground.

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

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>a. Keoi <u>matje</u> <b>*(dou)</b> soeng sik gaa3. [C]<br/>         3SG what DOU want eat SFP<br/>         ‘S/he wants to eat everything.’</p> | <p>b. <u>Shei</u> <b>*(dou)</b> hui lai ma? [M]<br/>         who DOU will come SFP<br/>         ‘Will everyone come?’</p> |
|---|---|

The universal *wh*-licensing fails when *dou* is right-dislocated, as illustrated in (30). For the *wh*-phrase to be licensed, *dou* must also occur in the main chunks in (31). Together, they suggest that reconstruction of licensors is not available, bearing out the prediction of the biclausal approach.<sup>14</sup>

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

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>a. *Keoi <u>matje</u> soeng sik gaa3 <b>dou</b>. [C]<br/>         3SG what want eat SFP DOU<br/>         Int.: ‘S/he wants to eat everything.’</p> | <p>b. *<u>Shei</u> hui lai ma <b>dou</b>? [M]<br/>         who will come SFP DOU<br/>         ‘Will everyone come?’</p> |
|---|---|

(31) Universal *wh*-licensing in DC

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>a. Keoi <u>matje</u> <b>dou</b> soeng sik gaa3 <u>matje</u> <b>dou</b>. [C]<br/>         3SG what DOU want eat SFP what DOU<br/>         Int.: ‘S/he wants to eat everything.’</p> | <p>b. <u>Shei</u> <b>dou</b> hui lai ma <u>shei</u> <b>dou</b>? [M]<br/>         who DOU will come SFP who DOU<br/>         ‘Will everyone come?’</p> |
|---|---|

Note that *dou* itself can be right-dislocated when its restrictor is a non-*wh*-nominal, such as a plural pronoun in (32) (see also Lu 1980:51 for Mainland Mandarin):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(32) a. <u>Keoidei</u> wui lai gaa3 <b>dou</b>. [C]<br/>         3PL will come SFP DOU<br/>         ‘They will all come.’</p> | <p>b. <u>Tamen</u> hui lai ma <b>dou</b>? [M]<br/>         3PL will come SFP DOU<br/>         ‘Will they all come?’</p> |
|--|---|

Two conclusions can be drawn from the contrast between (30) and (32). First, the ungrammaticality of (30) should not be attributed to the (im)mobility of *dou*: according to both approaches here, it can

14. As shown in (i), the *wh*-licensing by *dou* can be long-distance (Wu 1999). The failure of *wh*-licensing in (30), thus, cannot be attributed to some sort of locality constraints.

<p>(i) a. <u>Matje je</u> ngo gokdak keoi <b>dou</b> m-wui sik gaa3. [C]          what thing 1SG think 3SG DOU not-will eat SFP          ‘I think s/he won’t eat anything.’ (lit.: Everything, I think he s/he won’t eat.)</p> <p>b. <u>Shei</u> wo xiangxin Lisi <b>dou</b> hen xihuan. [M]          who 1SG believe Lisi DOU very like          ‘Everyone, I believe Lisi likes.’</p>	<p>(V &gt; -)</p> <p>(Wu 1999:145)</p>
---	--

and does undergo movement in (32). Second, since *dou*, as a distributor, needs to find its restrictor to quantify over (i.e., a plural DP), some sort of reconstruction is still needed in (32). Note the crucial difference between (30) and (32): the former requires reconstruction in the *main* chunk so as to license the *wh*-word, whereas the latter requires reconstruction in the *RD* chunk for quantification. This asymmetry can only be captured with a biclausal structure:

- (33) 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)

The former case is ruled out by the absence of licensers in CP1, while reconstruction in the latter case is made possible by the unpronounced structure in CP2. In contrast, a monoclausal structure wrongly predicts both to be possible.

As pointed out by a reviewer, this argument can be further strengthened by a case with ‘even’ focus. To begin with, ‘even’ focus typically requires negation (or superlatives), as noted by Cheng and Vicente (2013) and T. T.-M. Lee (2022, 2024).

- (34) Aaming lin-tai dou \*(**mei**) tai aa3. [C]  
 Ming even-read also not.yet read SFP  
 ‘Ming hasn’t even read yet.’

Interestingly, there is an asymmetry in whether the licensee or the licenser can be right-dislocated. Only the former can undergo GRD as in (35a), but not the latter as in (35b). This pattern follows from a biclausal structure, since the licenser *mei* is absent in the main chunk in (35b) in the first place (i.e., there is no trace of *mei* for reconstruction). On the other hand, there is unpronounced *mei* in the RD chunk in (35a) that renders licensing possible.<sup>15</sup>

- (35) a. [Aaming \_ **mei** tai aa3] lin-tai dou. (GRD of the licensee) [C]  
 Ming not.yet read SFP even-read also  
 ‘Ming hasn’t even read yet.’  
 b. \*[Aaming lin-tai dou \_ tai aa3] **mei**. (GRD of the licenser) [C]  
 Ming even-read also read SFP not.yet

Similar asymmetries are also found in Negative Polarity Item (NPI) licensing. *Cungloi* ‘ever’ in Cantonese is licensed by a following negation (same for *conglai* ‘ever’ in Mandarin, Progovac 1988; Hsieh 2001):

- (36) Mau-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)

15. I thank the reviewer for this sharp observation.

While *cungloi* can be right-dislocated (Cheung 2009a), its licensing negation cannot, as illustrated in (37). In other words, the negation cannot be “reconstructed” to the main chunk. Indeed, the ban on negation GRD is not limited to NPI licensing cases, as will be discussed in §3.3.

(37) Asymmetry in ‘ever’ NPI licensing in GRD [C]

- a. Mau-di        muitai **m-wui** boudou sisat ge cyunbou gaa3 cungloi.        (GRD of NPI)  
 certain-CL.PL media not-will report fact GE all.part SFP ever  
 ‘Some media will never report the whole truth.’
- b. \*Mau-di        muitai cungloi boudou sisat ge cyunbou gaa3 **m-wui**. (GRD of negation)  
 certain-CL.PL media ever report fact GE all.part SFP not-will

Another type of relation that may be disrupted through RD is binding relations, such as reflexive/variable binding by a universal quantifier in (38).<sup>16</sup>

(38) Reflexive binding by universal quantifiers

[Context: You are an officer in Dept. of Education. You just had a visit to a new school today, and your colleague asks you about the relationship between students and teachers in that school.]

- Ngo tengman [**mui jat-go hoksaang**]<sub>i</sub> dou m-zungji [keoizigei<sub>i</sub>-ge lousi] wo3. [C]  
 Wo tingshuo [**mei yi-ge xuesheng**]<sub>i</sub> dou bu-xihuan [taziji<sub>i</sub>-de laoshi] a. [M]  
 1SG hear every one-CL student DOU not-like 3SG.self-GE/DE teacher SFP  
 ‘I heard that every student doesn’t like his/her own teacher (lit.: himself/herself’s teacher).’

As observed by T. T.-M. Lee (2017), reflexives may be right-dislocated, such as (39a). This is taken to be an indication of reconstruction effects. Nevertheless, right-dislocating the binder ‘every student’ in (39b) is *ungrammatical*, though universal quantifiers can occur in RD chunks otherwise (see §3.4). A quantifier in the RD chunk cannot “reconstruct” into the main chunk to bind the reflexive.<sup>17</sup>

(39) Asymmetry in reflexive/variable binding in GRD

[Context: Same as (38)]

- a. Ngo tengman [**mui jat-go hoksaang**]<sub>i</sub> dou m-zungji \_ wo3 [keoizigei<sub>i</sub>-ge lousi]. [C]  
 Wo tingshuo [**mei yi-ge xuesheng**]<sub>i</sub> dou bu-xihuan \_ a [taziji<sub>i</sub>-de laoshi]. [M]  
 1SG hear every one-CL student DOU not-like SFP 3SG.self-GE/DE teacher  
 ‘I heard that every student doesn’t like his/her own teacher.’

16. There are two caveats in testing binding in RD. First, the context should be carefully controlled such that it does not contain a quantifier, since reflexives or variables can be fragment answers with their binders in a preceding question (Wei 2016:111; see §4.1 for fragment answers in RD). Second, the binder should be a quantifier (instead of a referential expression) and the bindee should be a polymorphic reflexive that is *singular*, to avoid binding by *pro* in the main chunk (see §3.4 for discussion).

17. Law (2003, pp.251-252) reports some Cantonese examples like (39b) to be acceptable, which were however rejected by 7 of my consultants. See fn. 16 for the importance to control for the context.

- b. ??Ngo tengman \_ m-zungji [keoizigei<sub>i</sub>-ge lousi] wo3 [mui jat-go hoksaang]<sub>i</sub> (dou). [C]  
 ??Wo tingshuo \_ bu-xihuan [taziji<sub>i</sub>-de laoshi] a [mei yi-ge xuesheng]<sub>i</sub> (dou). [M]  
 1SG hear not-like 3SG.self-GE/DE teacher SFP every one-CL student DOU

The above contrast in reconstruction effects is surprising given a monoclausal structure, since reconstruction should not be selective to the binder-bindee distinction. On the other hand, this contrast is not surprising at all with a biclausal structure, as in (40). Without an available binder, the reflexive in CP1 cannot be bound and violates Binding Principle A. In contrast, a bindee in CP2 can be reconstructed to a position bound by the binder that is unpronounced.

- (40) Biclausal approach predicts that only bindees can be right-dislocated with a gap  
 a. \*<sub>[CP1 ... bindee ... SFP]</sub> [<sub>CP2 binder<sub>i</sub> [... t<sub>i</sub> ...]</sub>] (no licensers in CP1)  
 b. [<sub>CP1 ... binder ... SFP]</sub> [<sub>CP2 bindee<sub>k</sub> [binder ... [t<sub>k</sub>] ...]</sub>] (bindees reconstruct and are bound by unpronounced binders in CP2)

### 3.3 Polarity reversal

The third argument concerns whether negation can be right-dislocated. Recall that heads like modals and verbs can be right-dislocated in GRD/DC (T. T.-M. Lee 2017, 2021a, 2022). Assuming a monoclausal structure, we might expect that movement of negation is allowed in GRD, as in (41a). In the biclausal structure in (41b), however, there is no empty negation in CP1. CP1 thus denotes an affirmative proposition. It contradicts CP2 that has a negative polarity, predicting unnaturalness.<sup>18</sup>

- (41) a. Monoclausal approach predicts that negation can be right-dislocated with a gap  
 [<sub>CP [TP ... t<sub>i</sub> ...]</sub>] [<sub>SFP [negation<sub>i</sub> ... t<sub>TP</sub>]]] (head movement of negation)  
 b. Biclausal approach predicts that negation cannot be right-dislocated with a gap  
 \*<sub>[CP1 ... (affirmative) ... SFP]</sub> [<sub>CP2 negation<sub>i</sub> [... t<sub>i</sub> ...]</sub>] (contradiction)</sub>

The attested pattern again conforms with the prediction of the biclausal approach. Negation cannot leave a gap in the main chunk as in (42a), nor can a negated modal be right-dislocated as in (42b). Only when the negation occurs twice (i.e., DC) are the sentences well-formed, as shown in (43).<sup>19</sup>

- (42) Negation cannot be right-dislocated in GRD  
 a. \*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.’

18. Contradictions are not ungrammatical, although systematic contradictions might be (see L-analyticity in Gajewski 2002).

19. Just like testing binding in RD, the test of negation GRD must also be carefully controlled such that the preceding context does not contain negation (see §4.1).

- b. \*Ta \_ qu Meiguo a **bu hui**. [M]  
 3SG go US SFP not will  
 Int.: ‘S/he won’t go to the US.’

(43) Negation can be right-dislocated in DC

20

- a. 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. 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 (42) is comparable to that of juxtaposing two contradicting propositions:

- (44) 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 (=37). Those cases are even more telling, since the main chunk contains an NPI that *requires* negative polarity, but the attempted reconstruction of negation still fails.

The restriction is not limited to syntactic negation. Any expression that conveys semantic negation cannot be right-dislocated. One case is NEG-*wh* constructions (Cheung 2009b), where a *wh*-word receives a negative reading. GRD of the NEG-*wh* word is not possible in (45).

(45) NEG-*wh* cannot be right-dislocated [M, same in C]

- a. Wo **na(r)** zhidao ne?! (baseline) b.\*Wo \_ zhidao ne **na(r)**?! (GRD)  
 1SG where know SFP 1SG know SFP where  
 ‘No way can I know.’ ((a) from Cheung 2009b:307)

Another case is the rhetorical question marker *saimat* ‘needn’t, (lit.) need-what’ in Cantonese (Tang 2022; see Choi 2022 for the NPI *sai* ‘need’). In (46), *saimat* cannot occur in RD chunks with a gap in the main chunk, again following from a biclausal structure.

(46) Rhetorical question marker *saimat* cannot be right-dislocated [C]

- a. **Saimat** man keoi zek1? (baseline) b.\*\_ man keoi zek1 **saimat**? (GRD)  
 need.what ask 3SG SFP ask 3SG SFP need.what  
 ‘What’s the point of asking him?’ ((a) from Tang 2022:306)

20. Chan (2016) and Chen (2016) observe that a single negation cannot be right-dislocated in DC, contrasting with (43) where an adverb/modal is copied together. I offer no explanation for this difference. Note that my Taiwan consultants did not accept (43b) due to their general ban on modal RD (see §4.2).

### 3.4 Availability of *pro*

The fourth argument is based on the referential possibilities of subject *pro*. In a monoclausal analysis, subject gaps in main chunks are created by movement. The subject may be a definite DP or a quantifier. In contrast, subject gaps in a biclausal analysis are empty pronouns. Since quantifiers are not referential expressions, *pro* cannot refer to them in the absence of variable binding (see §4.1; also Cheung 2015:254n12). We then expect that quantifiers cannot be right-dislocated.

- (47) a. Monoclausal approach predicts that quantifiers can be right-dislocated with a gap  
 [CP [TP ...  $t_i$  ... ] [SFP [quantifier<sub>*i*</sub> ...  $t_{TP}$  ]]] (quantifiers can move)
- b. Biclausal approach predicts that quantifiers cannot be right-dislocated with a gap  
 \*[CP<sub>1</sub> ...  $pro_i$  ... SFP ] [CP<sub>2</sub> quantifier<sub>*i*</sub> [...  $t_i$  ... ] ] (*pro* cannot refer to quantifiers)

As exemplified in (48), quantifiers like ‘few NP’ and ‘no NP’ cannot occur in GRD, confirming the prediction in (47b). For the sentences to be grammatical, the quantifiers need to be “copied” in DC.

- (48) Quantifiers can be right-dislocated in DC but not in GRD<sup>21</sup>
- a. Tenggong \*(**housiu-jan**) wui lai zaa3, **housiu-jan**. [C]  
 hear.say few-person will come SFP few-person  
 ‘I heard that few people will come.’
- b. Xianzai \*(**meiyou-ren**) xiangxin ni le, **meiyou-ren**. [M]  
 now nobody believe 2SG SFP nobody  
 ‘Now nobody believes you.’

Yet, there seem to be some counter-examples: ‘every NP’ and ‘small part (of) NP’ can be right-dislocated in (49). Note that ‘small part (of) NP’ and ‘few NP’ both express a small proportion.<sup>22</sup>

- (49) Some quantifiers can be right-dislocated in GRD
- a. Tenggong \_ wui lai gaa3, **siuboufan jan**. [C]  
 hear.say will come SFP small.part person  
 ‘I heard that few people (lit.: small portion of people) will come.’

21. A slight pause is preferred in these DC cases, particularly in Mandarin.

22. A reviewer points out RD of universal quantifiers is not grammatical in Taiwan Mandarin. Yet, most of my Mainland Mandarin consultants (rating distribution: 5, 5, 5, 5, 3) and most of my Taiwan Mandarin consultants (rating distribution: 5, 4, 4, 2) reported grammaticality of (49b). Some also found pronouncing *dou* in the main chunk to improve the judgment, though the difference was not huge. RD of universal quantifiers has also been reported in the literature (see Cheung 1997:51 for Cantonese; see Luke 2004:42 and Chen 2016:67,78 for Mandarin).



- b. [Context: Everyone did not trust me before. After some hard effort to gain faith from them, I now ask you whether everyone trusts me now. You say:]  
 Xianzai \_ (dou) xiangxin ni le, **mei yi-ge ren**. [M]  
 now DOU believe 2SG SFP every one-CL person  
 ‘Now everyone believes you.’

Nevertheless, an overt correlate can be realized in the main chunks in these cases (=50). A pronoun can even be pronounced in the RD chunks and form a partitive construction with the quantifier.

- (50) a. Tenggong gaaklaibaan<sub>k</sub> wui lai gaa3, (keoidei-ge<sub>k</sub>) **siuboufan jan**. [C]  
 hear.say next.class will come SFP 3PL-GE small.part person  
 Lit.: ‘I heard that the other class (as a group) will come, few of them.’  
 b. Xianzai Jiaban<sub>k</sub> (dou) xiangxin ni le, (tamen-de<sub>k</sub>) **mei yi-ge ren**. [M]  
 now A.class DOU believe 2SG SFP 3PL-DE every one-CL person  
 Lit.: ‘Now Class A believes you, each of them.’

I suggest that the difference between these two classes of quantifiers lies in the availability of a partitive use. ‘No NP’ and ‘few NP’, at least in Chinese, cannot form partitives:<sup>23,24</sup>

- (51) a. \*keoidei-ge housiu-jan [C] b. \*tamen-de meiyou-ren [M]  
 3PL-GE few-person 3PL-DE nobody  
 Int.: ‘few of them’ Int.: ‘none of them’

Hence, (49) can be analyzed as (52), where *pro* serves as the restriction of the quantifier in the RD chunks. This option is not available in (48).

- (52) [CP1 ... *pro<sub>k</sub>* ... SFP] [CP2 [*pro<sub>k</sub>* [**quantifier**]]<sub>i</sub> [... *t<sub>i</sub>* ...] ]

The current argument receives further support from an insightful observation by a reviewer. ‘Any’-type NPIs such as *jamho-coi* ‘any veggie’ in Cantonese cannot be right-dislocated with a gap as in (53a), despite that other NPIs such as *cungloi* ‘ever’ may (see §3.2). The key difference is that *jamho-coi* is a subject but not an adverb, and thus the main chunk contains *pro* as the gap. *Jamho-coi* is a narrow scope existential indefinite under negation (i.e.,  $\neg\exists$ ) that cannot be referred to by a pronoun including *pro*. The unacceptability of (53a) therefore follows. We also predict that *jamho-coi* should be able to copied in DC, since there is then no null *pro* in the main chunk. This prediction is borne out in (53b).

- (53) a. ??[Ngo m-gokdak \_ houmei lo1] **jamho-coi**. (GRD) [C]  
 1SG not-think tasty SFP any.veggie  
 Int.: ‘I don’t think any veggie is tasty.’

23. The use of *ge/de* is necessary to avoid a topic parse of the pronouns.

24. The difference potentially has to do with the internal structure of ‘no NP’ and ‘few NP’, which has been argued to be distinct from other quantifiers like ‘every NP’ in Chinese (Paul 2021).

- b. [Ngo m-gokdak **jamho-coi** houmei lo1] **jamho-coi**. (DC) [C]  
 1SG not-think any.veggie tasty SFP any.veggie  
 ‘I don’t think any veggie is tasty.’

### 3.5 SFP clustering

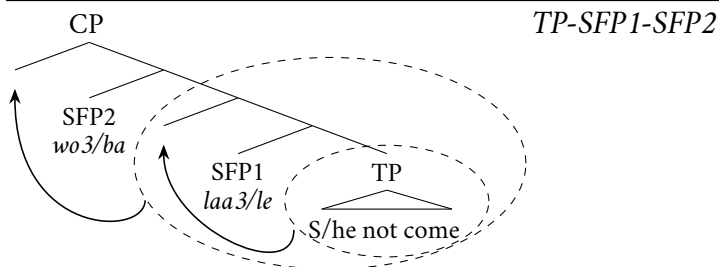
The last argument comes from SFP clustering in RD. To begin with, SFPs can be stacked in Chinese, as in the sentences with a canonical word order in (54). The left SFPs (*laa3* and *le*, both temporal) are structurally lower, and the right ones (evidential *wo3* and epistemic *ba*) are structurally higher (Sybesma and Li 2007; Paul 2014).

(54) SFP clusters in canonical sentences

- |    |                            |                   |     |    |                            |                |     |
|----|----------------------------|-------------------|-----|----|----------------------------|----------------|-----|
| a. | Keoi m-lai                 | <b>laa3 wo3</b> . | [C] | b. | Ta bu lai                  | <b>le ba</b> . | [M] |
|    | 3SG not-come SFP SFP       |                   |     |    | 3SG not come SFP SFP       |                |     |
|    | ‘I heard s/he won’t come.’ |                   |     |    | ‘I guess s/he won’t come.’ |                |     |

With the head-initial assumption of SFPs, their sentence-final order is derived by “snowball” Comp-to-Spec movement (Simpson and Wu 2002; V. J. Pan 2022, *i.a.*), as illustrated in (55).<sup>25</sup>

(55) “Snowball” Comp-to-Spec movement in canonical sentences



Importantly, the SFP clusters in RD must have the same linear order as in canonical sentences (see also Cheung 2009a:202), as in (56).

(56) SFP clusters in RD (GRD and DC)

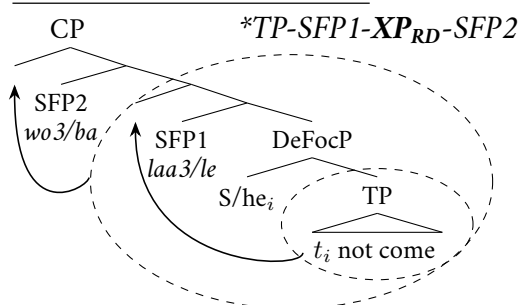
- |    |                            |                 |                 |       |    |                            |              |              |     |
|----|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|----|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----|
| a. | (Keoi) m-lai               | <b>laa3 wo3</b> | keoi.           | [C]   | c. | (Ta) bu lai                | <b>le ba</b> | ta.          | [M] |
|    | 3SG not-come SFP SFP       |                 | 3SG             |       |    | 3SG not come SFP SFP       |              | 3SG          |     |
|    | ‘I heard s/he won’t come.’ |                 |                 |       |    | ‘I guess s/he won’t come.’ |              |              |     |
| b. | *{_/ Keoi}                 | m-lai           | <b>wo3 laa3</b> | keoi. | d. | *{_/ Ta}                   | bu lai       | <b>ba le</b> | ta. |
|    | 3SG not-come SFP SFP       |                 | 3SG             |       |    | 3SG not come SFP SFP       |              | 3SG          |     |

Applying the “snowball” movement in RD with a monoclausal analysis (e.g., T. T.-M. Lee 2017), however, would yield an unattested word order where SFP2 (*wo3/ba*) follows the RD chunks in (57) (=59), since DeFocP is lower than SFP1 (*laa3/le*). Alternatively, the remnant TP may undergo Spec-to-Spec

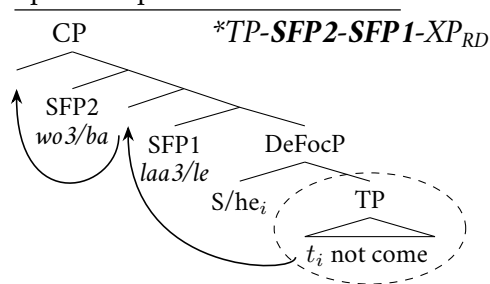
25. The argument below does not extend to a head-final SFP theory of RD.

movement like (58) so both SFPs precede RD chunks. The SFP ordering is now undesirably reversed. SFP1 follows SFP2 (\**wo3/ba* < *laa3/le*), which is ungrammatical as we saw above.

(57) “Snowball” movement in RD



(58) Spec-to-Spec movement in RD

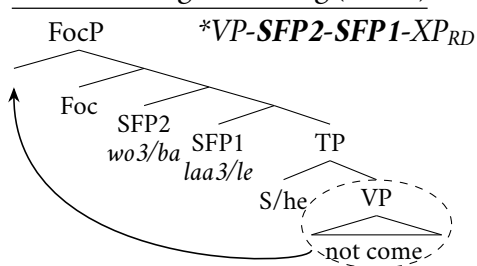


(59) \*{  / Keoi} m-lai      laa3 **keoi** wo3.  
           3SG   not-come   SFP   3SG   SFP  
           Int.: ‘I heard s/he won’t come.’

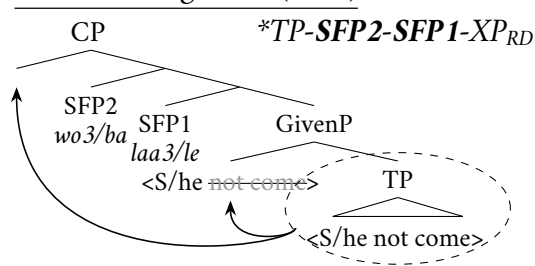
[C, same in M]

This problem is general to all existing monoclausal accounts that assume head-initial SFPs. Other analyses, such as Cheung (2009a)’s one-step focus movement and Lai (2019)’s parallel copying also predict the unattested word order with reversed SFPs like (58), as shown in (60) and (61) respectively.

(60) SFP clustering in Cheung (2009a)



(61) SFP clustering in Lai (2019)



In contrast, if RD has a biclausal structure, the SFP cluster simply belongs to CP1. It is compatible with both head-initial and head-final assumptions of SFP. With the former, regular “snowball” movement applies in CP1; with the latter, no movement occurs, as schematized in (62). Hence, I conclude that the biclausal approach is the most optimal option for capturing SFP clusters in RD.

- (62) a. [CP1 [FP TP [SFP1 *t*<sub>TP</sub>]] [SFP2 *t*<sub>FP</sub>]] [CP2 XP<sub>RD</sub> [... *t*<sub>XP</sub> ...]] (head-initial SFPs)  
       b. [CP1 [FP TP SFP1] SFP2] [CP2 XP<sub>RD</sub> [... *t*<sub>XP</sub> ...]] (head-final SFPs)

### 3.6 Interim summary

I have argued here that RD, including both GRD and DC variants, is consistently biclausal, not monoclausal. The discussed biclausal properties are summarized in Table 1 together with other core properties of RD discussed in §2.1.

Properties of RD		Monoclausal	Biclausal
Major (§2)	(Non-)constituency in RD chunks	✓	✓
	(Non-)constituency in main chunks	✓	✓
	Movement properties	✓	✓
	Root phenomenon	✓	✓
	(De)focus	✓	✓
Biclausal (§3)	Imperfect copying	✗	✓
	Licensing/binding asymmetries	✗	✓
	No polarity reversal	✗	✓
	Parallel referential potential to <i>pro</i>	✗	✓
	SFP cluster ordering	✗	✓

Table 1: Comparison of monoclausal and biclausal approaches to RD (first version)

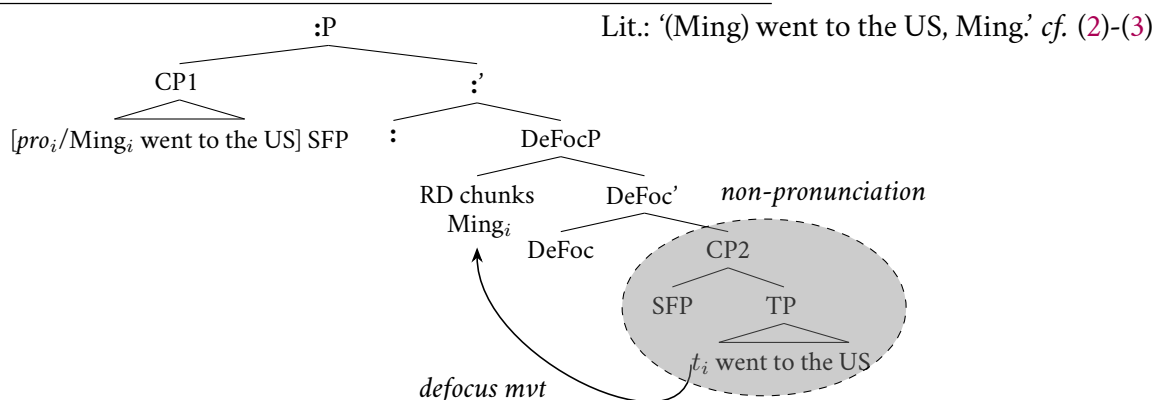
## 4 Towards a uniform biclausal syntax

I propose that RD in Chinese uniformly involves coordination of two clauses, the main chunks and the RD chunks. The proposal is an extension of Cheung (2015)’s account of DC with significant refinement. It consists of the four major components in (63), as illustrated in (64) (only glosses are given). The two RD variants, GRD and DC, share the same basic structure with the minimal difference that GRD contains empty categories in CP1.

(63) 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/ “Sluicing”:** The remnant CP2 is not pronounced (i.e., sluiced).
- d. **Coordination:** CP1 and DeFocP are coordinated by a specifying conjunction **:**.

(64) A sample derivation of right dislocation of subjects (GRD/DC)



Without going into details, we can already see how some properties of RD fall out. Imperfect copying comes for free since CP1 and DeFocP need not to be identical, at least for the pronounced part. The canonical ordering in SFP clusters is also predicted, as the SFPs belong to CP1. In the following, I build the proposal incrementally by elaborating on each of the four components, and show how they capture the other properties. I first discuss empty categories in the main chunks in §4.1, then defocus movement and non-pronunciation of its remnant in the RD chunks in §4.2-4.3, and finally how the two chunks are put together in §4.4. I briefly compare my proposal to other biclausal proposals in §4.5.

#### 4.1 Empty categories in the main chunk

Empty categories in the main chunk (=CP1) underpin the difference between GRD and DC. I propose that CP1 allows three types of (base-generated) empty elements that correspond to the pronounced elements in CP2: null subjects (i.e., *pro*), null objects, and empty verbs. I further suggest that no other empty categories are allowed in CP1, and CP1 does not involve backward deletion that depends on CP2.<sup>26</sup> In the case of GRD of adjuncts, CP1 simply lacks the adjuncts. The same applies to functional heads like negation and modals. We then obtain four types of GRD in (65).

(65) 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)

The analysis in (65) captures the following. First, it derives the apparently flexible constituency of main chunks: the first and last types give a pronounced constituent (e.g., VP or CP), and the second and

26. The possibility of backward deletion is entertained in Shi (1992). Cheung (2009a) also mentions (and rejects) scattered deletion in RD.

third types result in apparent non-constituents. Second, this restrictive view explains the prohibition on GRD of licensors and polarity reversal: there is no empty *dou* or empty negation possible in CP1. Third, the three types of empty categories are independently attested in Chinese: see Huang (1982, 1989) for null subjects; Y.-H. A. Li (2005), Aoun and Li (2008), and Y.-H. A. Li (2014) for null objects; Yue-Hashimoto (1969) and Tang (1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2016) for empty copular and non-copular verbs. Therefore, GRD should be subject to the same structural constraints on these empty categories. Below, I briefly show that this is the case with empty subjects.

Empty subjects in Chinese have been argued to be silent pronoun *pro* (Huang 1982 *et seq.*). As already discussed, GRD of quantifiers is banned, which is reduced to the unavailability of corresponding *pro*. To see how *pro* fails to refer to a quantifier, consider (66) first. Here, *pro* in the adjunct can refer to the definite subject that does not c-command it.

- (66) [*pro*<sub>i</sub> yi hui dao jia], Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> jiu ku. [M, same in C]  
 once return to home Zhangsan then cry  
 ‘As soon as he<sub>i</sub> arrived home, Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> began to cry.’ (Huang 1989:198)

In contrast, it is obligatory for a quantifier to c-command *pro* for co-indexing (i.e., variable binding) as in (67). Otherwise, *pro* cannot refer to the quantifier.

- (67) *pro* cannot refer to quantifiers [M, same in C]  
 a. {**Meiyou-ren/ henshao-ren/ mei yi-ge ren dou/ shaobufen ren**}<sub>k</sub>  
 nobody/ few.people/ every one-CL person DOU/ small.part person  
 [*pro*<sub>k</sub> yi hui dao jia] jiu ku.  
 once return to home then cry  
 ‘Nobody/few people/everyone/small portion of people began to cry as soon as they arrived home.’  
 b. \* [*pro*<sub>k</sub> yi hui dao jia], {**meiyou-ren/ henshao-ren/ mei yi-ge ren**  
 once return to home nobody/ few.people/ every one-CL person  
**dou/ shaobufen ren**}<sub>k</sub> jiu ku.  
 DOU/ small.part person then cry

The view that empty categories correspond to the gaps in GRD captures a very interesting typological correlation. As noted by Ott and de Vries (2016), Dutch, German, and English, where null arguments are not possible, all disallow argument GRD. On the other hand, both subject and object GRD are allowed in Japanese (Tanaka 2001) and Korean (Park and Kim 2009) where null subjects and objects are possible, just like Chinese. Even more curiously, in Romance languages that allow null subjects but not null objects, only subject GRD is allowed, such as Catalan and Spanish (Fernández-Sánchez 2017). Only a biclausal approach is able to capture this strong connection between the inventory of null elements and the availability of GRD. A monoclausal approach misses this generalization since

it predicts that GRD should be correlated with whether an element can move, rather than whether it can be null.

Before moving on the next component, it is useful to clarify that there can be another source of silence given appropriate contexts. Recall that the main chunk does not allow backward deletion that depends on the RD chunk. Nevertheless, there could be *forward* deletion licensed by *preceding* sentences. To illustrate, consider cases like (68-A) with a nominal main chunk. Surprisingly, the RD chunk here allows negation (see also Cheung 1997:113). Positing empty categories is insufficient here (e.g., [CP1 *pro* *e*<sub>verb</sub> US]), as (68) should then be banned due to polarity reversal.


- (68) Q. Siuming **m-wui** heoi bindou? [C]  
 Ming not-will go where  
 ‘Where will Ming not go?’  
 A. Meigwok lo1 Siuming **m-wui** heoi.  
 US SFP Ming not-will go  
 ‘Ming will not go to the US.’

I suggest that (68-A) involves forward deletion licensed by the preceding question in (68-Q), which contains a negation. Hence, there is no polarity reversal between the main chunk and RD chunk. Notice that these cases are often unnatural unless in a question/answer pair, an observation that dates back to Lu (1980, p.56) as well as Cheung (2009a, p.200n4). Notably, the nominal itself may be a fragment answer:

- (69) Meigwok lo1. Answer to (68-Q) [C]  
 US SFP  
 ‘The US.’


Following Wei (2016), fragment answers to *wh*-questions in Chinese are derived by focus movement (to SpecFocP) followed by TP ellipsis. Applying to GRD like (68), the nominal in the main chunk moves up, leaving an elided clausal structure, as analyzed in (70):

- (70) A biclausal analysis of RD with nominal main chunks  

$$[_{CP1} [_{FocP} \text{Meigwok} [_{TP} \text{Aaming m-wui heoi} \_ ] ] \text{lo1} ] [_{CP2} \text{Aaming m-wui heoi} [ \dots ] ]$$


## 4.2 Defocus movement in the RD chunk

Turning to the RD chunk, I follow T. T.-M. Lee (2017) and propose that the pronounced materials undergo defocus movement to the periphery.

- (71) [CP1] [DeFocP XP<sub>i[-Foc]</sub> [DeFoc' DeFoc [CP2 ... t<sub>XP</sub> ... ] ]]
- 

DeFoc, as a syntactic projection, is the counterpart of Foc(us). I assume that defocused elements carry [-Foc] that must be checked by a DeFoc head by moving to its specifier, as opposed to focused elements which bear [+Foc]. DeFocP projects higher than CP (or equivalent split-CP projections), as evidenced by the root phenomenon nature of RD. Note that defocus has morphosyntactic manifestation in Chinese and also other languages. For example, RD of verbs in Cantonese, unlike verb topicalization (contrastive) and *lin* ‘even’ verb doubling, does not trigger focus intervention effects, as discussed extensively in T. T.-M. Lee (2022, 2024). This is the natural consequence of the recruitment of [-Foc], assuming that focus intervention effects are triggered by [+Foc] which is present in other verb doubling cases. Manifestation in other languages includes p-movement in Italian/Spanish or anti-focus markers in Bantu (see T. T.-M. Lee 2020 and references therein).<sup>27</sup> Therefore, defocus is not merely non-focus, and defocused elements in RD should be treated as having [-Foc] rather lacking any [(+)Foc].<sup>28</sup>

The movement properties, such as island effects and reconstruction for Principle C (as well as Principle A, §3.2), follow automatically:

- (72) a. \* [CP1] [DeFocP XP<sub>[-Foc]</sub> [DeFoc' DeFoc [CP2 ... [island ... t<sub>XP</sub> ... ] ... ] ] ] ] (Island violation)
- b. \* [CP1] [DeFocP XP<sub>k[-Foc]</sub> [DeFoc' DeFoc [CP2 ... YP<sub>k</sub> [ ... t<sub>XP<sub>k</sub></sub> ] ... ] ] ] ] (Reconstruction for Principle C)
- 
- The diagram shows two syntactic trees. In (72a), a grey box highlights the CP2 complement. An arrow points from the XP<sub>[-Foc]</sub> in the specifier of DeFocP to the t<sub>XP</sub> trace in the CP2 complement. A large 'X' is placed over the arrow, indicating an island violation. In (72b), a grey box highlights the YP<sub>k</sub> complement. An arrow points from the XP<sub>k[-Foc]</sub> in the specifier of DeFocP to the t<sub>XP<sub>k</sub></sub> trace in the YP<sub>k</sub> complement. A large 'X' is placed over the arrow, indicating reconstruction for Principle C.

Moreover, the movement can derive non-constituents in RD chunks by assuming Multi-Spec for DeFocP. For example, a *S-Mod* RD chunk like (73) can be derived by multiple movement of the subject and modal, along the lines of T. T.-M. Lee (2017, 2021a). The derivation here involves (long) head movement of modals to specifier positions, which has been independently argued for by T. T.-M. Lee (2022, 2024) and Yip and Lee (2022) for Chinese.

- (73) (Keoi wui) heoi Meigwok aa3 **keoi wui**. (S-Mod-)/VP-SFP-S-Mod  
 3SG will go US SFP 3SG will  
 ‘S/he will go to the US.’ [C, same in M]

- (74) Non-constituents in RD chunks as multiple movement  
 [CP1] [DeFocP S<sub>[-Foc]</sub> [DeFoc' Mod<sub>[-Foc]</sub> [DeFoc' DeFoc ... [TP t<sub>S</sub> t<sub>Mod</sub> VP ] ] ] ] ] multiple mvt.
- 
- The diagram shows a syntactic tree for (74). A grey box highlights the TP complement. Arrows point from S<sub>[-Foc]</sub> in the specifier of DeFocP to the t<sub>S</sub> trace in the TP complement, and from Mod<sub>[-Foc]</sub> in the specifier of DeFoc' to the t<sub>Mod</sub> trace in the TP complement. The label 'multiple mvt.' is placed to the right of the tree.

The word order in RD chunks cannot be inverted (i.e., \**Mod-S*). That is, the linear order must be preserved after movement. This is not surprising, given that multiple *wh*-fronting in [+MFS] (=Multiply

27. While I adopt the notion of defocus instead of givenness, givenness-related movement is also widely attested in languages like Czech, Russian, and Serbo-Croatian (see Kučerová 2012).

28. Defocus is not “topic” either, since topics can be contrastive. T. T.-M. Lee (2020) also reports that topic particles are prohibited in RD chunks.



Filled Spec) languages also have similar constraints (e.g., Rudin 1988). Alternatively, T. T.-M. Lee (2021a)'s account based on Cyclic Linearization can be adopted here.<sup>29</sup>

While the RD elements must preserve the linear order in the main chunks, they may be discontinuous. A relevant example is found in Cheung (2015)'s corpus:

- (75) Discontinuous RD chunks S-Adv-V-CP-SFP-S-V  
**Keoi dou gokdak** hai gei hou gaa **keoi gokdak.** [C]  
 3SG also feel COP quite good SFP 3SG feel  
 'He also felt that it is quite good.' (Cheung 2015:271)

As will be discussed in §4.3, the unpronounced part in CP2 must be syntactically identical to CP1. Thus, I propose that the adverb *dou* 'also', in-between the subject and the verb, is also present in CP2. The S-V chunk here is discontinuous. A multiple movement analysis is able to derive these cases as in (76). Note that Cheung (2015)'s ellipsis + sluicing account predicts contiguity of the RD chunk (p.256n15) and is not able to capture (75).<sup>30</sup>

- (76) [CP1] [<sub>DeFocP</sub> S<sub>[-Foc]</sub> [<sub>DeFoc'</sub> V<sub>[-Foc]</sub> [<sub>DeFoc'</sub> DeFoc ... [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>S</sub> Adv t<sub>V</sub> CP ] ]]] multiple mvt.
- 

Before proceeding, I would like to address a point of variations. Taiwan Mandarin seems to systematically block heads in the RD position. Verb RD is severely degraded for my consultants from Taiwan (see also fn.6), so as modal RD. Only RD of subjects, objects, and adjuncts like *zuotian* 'yesterday' is readily available. This is not the case in Mainland Mandarin where RD of verbs and modals is commonly observed (Lu 1980; Chen 2016), as confirmed by my consultants from both Southern and Northern Mainland China. I speculate that the dialectal variation is related to the fact that RD is very unproductive in Taiwanese (Southern Min), as observed by Tang (2018a) for Chenghai Southern Min. Theoretically, this may be modeled as whether Head-to-Spec movement is independently available in the dialect/language, which awaits a separate occasion for full exploration.

### 4.3 Non-pronunciation in the RD chunk

The defocus movement leaves a remnant CP2. I follow Cheung (2015) in assuming that the CP2 is unpronounced/"deleted" in the PF, and only the defocus-moved element(s) are pronounced. I further propose the following licensing condition based on syntactic identity with main chunks:

29. C. W. Y. Lau (2022) discusses a case of "double dislocation focus constructions" in Cantonese, which involve RD elements with inverted word order. A pause is needed between the inverted elements, which is not the case in (73). I speculate that Lau's cases involve multiple conjuncts as [[CP1 : DeFocP1] : DeFocP2].

30. Apart from adverbs, arguments may also be "skipped" in RD chunks, such as the subject in (i):

- (i) **Na wo jiu** shi-shi ba **na jiu.** [M]  
 so 1SG then try-try SFP so then  
 '(If so,) then I'll give a try.' (Luke 2004:41)

(77) The licensing condition on non-pronunciation in RD chunks

The unpronounced materials (excluding traces) in CP2 must be syntactically identical to CP1.

The effect of (77) can be witnessed in (78). The modal *wui* ‘will’ is incompatible with the perfective negation *mei* ‘not yet’, and right-dislocating *wui* does not alter the ungrammaticality.

(78) Aspect mismatches are prohibited in RD [C, same in M]

a. Keoi wui (\*mei) heoi Meigwok aa3.  
3SG will not.yet go US SFP  
‘S/he will (\*not yet) go to the US.’

b. \*<sub>[CP1</sub> *pro<sub>k</sub>* mei heoi Meigwok aa3 ] **keoi wui.** (GRD)  
not.yet go US SFP 3SG will  
Lit.: ‘Not yet go to the US, s/he will.’

(78b) indicates that the deletion site in the RD chunk must include the negation, as shown in (79). This contrasts with the ellipsis in (80), which targets VP instead of NegP.

(79) \*<sub>[CP1]</sub> [<sub>DeFocP</sub> **keoi<sub>k</sub> wui<sub>j</sub>** [<sub>CP2</sub> *t<sub>k</sub> t<sub>j</sub>* [<sub>NegP</sub> mei [<sub>VP</sub> heoi Meigwok]] aa3] ] (=78b)

(80) Keoi mei heoi Meigwok aa3, daanhai keoi houfaai zau wui (heoi Meigwok).  
3SG not.yet go US SFP but 3SG soon then will go US  
‘S/he hasn’t gone to the US yet, but s/he will (go to the US) soon.’

Furthermore, semantic identity alone does not suffice to license the deletion in RD chunks, as evidenced by the absence of “vehicle change”. Vehicle change refers the phenomenon when a bound R-expression in an elliptical site is replaced with a pronoun to avoid Principle C violation (Fiengo and May 1994), as illustrated by the VP ellipsis in (81).

(81) Ngo m-wui seon Aaming<sub>k</sub> hoji caamgaa beicoi. **Keoi<sub>k</sub>** zigei dou m-wui  
1SG not-will believe Ming may join competition 3SG self also not-will  
(seon {keoi<sub>k</sub>/ \*Aaming<sub>k</sub>} hoji caamgaa beicoi) lo1.  
believe 3SG Ming may join competition SFP  
‘I won’t believe Ming can join the competition. He himself won’t as well.’ [C, same in M]

Parallel cases, however, cannot be constructed for RD. In (82), the matrix subject pronoun in the RD chunk cannot be co-indexed with the unpronounced, embedded R-expression *John*.<sup>31</sup> Vehicle change is not possible, though replacing *John* with a pronoun does not change the propositional content. In other words, strict syntactic identity is required for non-pronunciation in RD chunks.

31. Originally, Cheung (2009a) takes (82) to indicate reconstruction of the main chunk to the RD chunk under a monoclausal approach.

(82) No vehicle change effects in RD chunks [C, same in M]

- a. [CP<sub>1</sub> John<sub>k</sub> m-hoji caamgaa beicoi lo1] **keoi**<sub>j/\*k</sub> **soengseon**.  
 John not-may join competition SFP 3SG believe  
 Lit.: ‘John<sub>k</sub> cannot join the competition, he<sub>j/\*k</sub> believes.’

(adapted from Cheung 2009a:216)

- b. [CP<sub>1</sub>] [DeFocP **keoi**<sub>j/\*k</sub> **soengseon**<sub>i</sub> [CP<sub>2</sub> *t*<sub>j</sub> *t*<sub>i</sub> John<sub>k</sub> m-hoji caamgaa beicoi lo1] ]

#### 4.4 Coordination of the two chunks

After discussing the internal make-up of main chunks and RD chunks, now we turn to how they are coordinated. In Ott and de Vries (2016)’s work on Germanic languages, they propose that RD (with backgrounded *d*XP<sub>s</sub>, in their terms) and afterthoughts, though both being biclausal, differ in the way the two clauses are connected. The former involves a specifying coordination : (colon) (Koster 2000; de Vries 2006, 2009), whereas the latter involves simple juxtaposition, as illustrated in (83).

- (83) a. [ :P [CP<sub>1</sub> ... correlate<sub>i</sub> ... ] [ : [CP<sub>2</sub> *d*XP<sub>i</sub> [ ... ] ] ] ] (RD)  
 E.g., (Q: Do you know Peter?) Yes, I know him<sub>i</sub>, Peter<sub>i</sub>. (Ott and de Vries 2016:643)  
 b. [CP<sub>1</sub> ... correlate<sub>i</sub> ... ] [CP<sub>2</sub> *d*XP<sub>i</sub> [ ... ] ] (afterthoughts)  
 E.g., I met a star<sub>i</sub> today: John Travolta<sub>i</sub>! (Ott and de Vries 2016:643)

In (83a), the two clauses “stand in an asymmetrical semantic relationship”, with the second clause “specifying the first by adding relevant information to it” (p.649). Notice that the information *can* be discourse-given, such as *Peter* in (83a). Afterthought clauses, in contrast, are independent of the first one and usually introduce new information.

I follow Ott and de Vries (2016) in assuming that the two chunks in RD are *asymmetrically* coordinated by : to form a larger structure :P, instead of simple juxtaposition (*contra*. Cheung 2015). Put differently, the two clauses in RD are *not* independent of each other, unlike afterthoughts.<sup>32</sup>

- (84) [ :P [CP<sub>1</sub> ... {*e*<sub>i</sub> / XP1<sub>i</sub>} ... SFP ] [ : [DeFocP XP2<sub>i</sub>[ -Foc ] [DeFoc' DeFoc [CP<sub>2</sub> ... *t*<sub>XP2</sub> ... ] ] ] ] ]

One general concern on the biclausal approach is that how the choice of the second clause is constrained. Cheung (2015) proposes that “parallel clauses” (p.246) are juxtaposed, but it is too loose of a restriction, since sentences with different subjects can be juxtaposed in a listing scenario like (85a), but RD of non-co-referential subjects is clearly impossible in (85b).

32. Ott and de Vries (2016) also suggest that (83) derives a difference in prosody. In backgrounding RD, the connected structure gives rise to a single prosodic unit, whereas in afterthoughts, the second clause is independent and forms its own prosodic unit. Similar contrasts are experimentally confirmed in Cantonese and Mandarin by Yip (2020) (see also Zhang 2022). Yip shows that GRD consists of one intonational phrase, unlike afterthoughts which are two intonational phrases (e.g., allowing two boundary tones).

- (85) a. [Context: Someone asks you whether Ming, Fan, and Lok will come. You check the list one line by one line, and say:]  
 Aaming wui lai laa1, Aafan wui lai laa1, Aalok ... [C]  
 Ming will come SFP Ming will come SFP Lok  
 ‘Ming will come, Fan will come, Lok ...’
- b. \***Aaming** wui lai laa1, **Aafan**. [C]  
 Ming will come SFP Fan

On the other hand, in Abe (2019)’s biclausal approach to Japanese RD, the two clauses are proposed to have the same propositional content. This is however too strict: in the case of adverb GRD, CP1 does not have a corresponding null adverb and thus denotes a different proposition from CP2.

I suggest that the specifying coordination : provides an appropriate theoretical handle for this problem. Coordinators restrict the semantic relations between the conjuncts, as can be seen from the distinction between English *and*, *or*, *but*, and *so* (see de Vries 2009 for a typology). The original motivation of : comes from extraposition in Dutch/German (Koster 2000) and apposition like *my best friend, John* (de Vries 2006), where a secondary material *anchors* to some previous expression (i.e., *John* anchors to *my best friend*) with further specification of the content, similar to the function of *namely*. Applying to RD, the notion of anchoring resolves the looseness issue of juxtaposition, and the specifying function resolves the overrigidity issue of propositional identity. I propose novel conditions for :P in RD in (86):

(86) Conditions on specifying coordination :P in RD

- a. *Stronger information strength*: Conjunct 2 is more informative than Conjunct 1.
- b. *Consistent truth condition*: The set of possible worlds denoted by Conjunct 2 is the subset of that denoted by Conjunct 1 (i.e.,  $[[\text{Conjunct 1}]] \supseteq [[\text{Conjunct 2}]]$ ).
- c. *Unified speech act*: Conjuncts 1 and 2 have the same illocutionary force.

Condition (86a) formulates the specifying function. For example, ‘John<sub>i</sub> comes’ is more informative than ‘he<sub>i</sub> comes’, even when the referent of the pronoun is fixed by the context.<sup>33</sup> In the case of GRD, XP2 in (84) specifies the descriptive content of the empty category  $e_i$  in CP1. The same can be said for DC with partial or imperfect copying. In the case of DC with “complete” copying, I suggest that DeFocP specifies that XP is defocused: XP1 does not carry [-Foc] but XP2 does. Moreover, since the coordination is asymmetrical, it is not possible to flip the order of CP1 and DeFocP. That is, the latter must follow the former. This analysis captures the intuition from Shi (1992), Luke (2004), and Tang (2018b) that the RD chunk is an “extension” of the main chunk.

33. I adopt Condoravdi (2021, p.82)’s formal definition of informativeness below. I thank Xuotong Yuan for drawing my attention to this definition.

(i)  $\phi_1$  is informationally at least as strong as  $\phi_2$  iff for any context  $c$  relative to which  $\phi_1$  and  $\phi_2$  are felicitous,  $c + \phi_1 \subseteq c + \phi_2$ .

Condition (86b) says that the proposition expressed by the second clause entails the proposition denoted by the first one. They can be the same proposition in cases of argument GRD. They can also be different propositions, such as the adverb GRD below:

- (87) [<sub>CP1</sub> Aaming wui heoi Meigwok aa3] [<sub>DeFocP</sub> tingjat [<sub>CP2 ...</sub>]]. [C]  
 Ming will go US SFP tomorrow  
 ‘Ming will go to the US tomorrow.’

Here, CP1 denotes the proposition ‘Ming will go to the US (at some future time point)’, and DeFocP specifies the time point as tomorrow: ‘Ming will go to the US tomorrow’. The latter entails the former.

This condition also explains why negation cannot be right-dislocated in GRD. With negation in DeFocP, the set of possible worlds denoted by DeFocP is no longer a subset of that denoted by affirmative CP1 (i.e.,  $\{w: p(w)\} \not\supseteq \{w: \neg p(w)\}$ ), violating (86b).<sup>34</sup> Put differently, (86b) predicts that negation can be right-dislocated as long as CP1 contains an element signaling a logical negation. This is the case with negation copying in DC (i.e.,  $\{w: \neg p(w)\} \supseteq \{w: \neg p(w)\}$ ). Another interesting case is related to rhetorical questions (RQs). Cantonese RQ marker *saimat* ‘needn’t’ (see §3.3) has a variant *saigwai* ‘needn’t, (lit.) need-ghost’ (where *gwai* ‘ghost’ is a negator; Lee and Chin 2007). Unlike *saimat*, *saigwai* is compatible with the yes-no question SFP *me1*. When *me1* is prolonged (indicated by ~), the question becomes an RQ and denotes a negative proposition (Choi 2024), even without *saigwai* in (88a). It is only in this case that *saigwai* can be right-dislocated, as in (88b). The negation in CP1 is supplied by RQ *me1*, satisfying (86b).

- (88) a. (**Saigwai**) zung zou ni-joeng je **me1**~ [C]  
 need.ghost still do this-CL thing SFP  
 ‘No need to do this anymore.’  
 b. Zung zou ni-joeng je **me1**~ **saigwai**. [C]  
 still do this-CL thing SFP need.ghost  
 ‘No need to do this anymore.’

Condition (86c) states that the two clauses should share the same illocutionary force and be one unified speech act, based on the traditional wisdom that RD as a whole is still one sentence (unlike afterthoughts). Interestingly, this condition offers an insight to explain an old puzzle observed by

34. A reviewer insightfully observes that *geifu* ‘almost’ can be right-dislocated in Cantonese, as in (i). It at first glance challenges Condition (86b), since ‘Aaming was almost hit by a car’ does not entail ‘Aaming was hit by a car’. I suggest that this example involves forward deletion licensed by a preceding context instead (see §4.1). That is, CP1 actually contains an elided *geifu* ‘almost’. Evidence comes from the contrast in (ii): only Q2, but not Q1, supports the answer (i).

- (i) [Bei ce zongdou aa3] Aaming **geifu**. [C]  
 by car hit.down SFP Ming almost  
 ‘Ming was almost hit by a car.’ (Cheung 1997:110)

- (ii) a. [Q1: Was Ming hit by a car?] A: #(i)/ #No, (i)  
 b. [Q2: Was Ming almost hit by a car?] A: (i)/ Yes, (i)

Cheung (1997, p.130) that *dimgaai* ‘why’ in Cantonese can only be right-dislocated with the SFP *ge2*. T. T.-M. Lee (2020) further notes that with another SFP *aa3*, RD is ungrammatical, although *aa3* is compatible with *dimgaai* in canonical sentences as illustrated in (89).

- (89) a. [Nei gamjat m-faanhok {**ge2/ \*aa3**} dimgaai? [C]  
 2SG today not-go.to.school SFP SFP why  
 ‘Why don’t you go to school today?’ (T. T.-M. Lee 2020:140)
- b. [Nei dimgaai gamjat m-faanhok {**ge2/ aa3**}? [C]  
 2SG why today not-go.to.school SFP SFP  
 ‘Why don’t you go to school today?’

*Ge2* is a question particle that indicates a ‘why’-question even without *dimgaai* (Tang 2015b). On the other hand, *aa3* only expresses an assertion without *wh*-words, as in (90). It is now clear that the contrast in (89) is a result of the condition (86c): since *aa3*-CP1 expresses an assertion, its speech act is different from the question force in CP2 with *dimgaai*. *Ge2*-CP1, on the other hand, expresses the same ‘why’ question force, allowing *dimgaai* RD.<sup>35</sup>

- (90) a. Nei gamjat m-faanhok **ge2?** = Nei **dimgaai** gamjat m-faanhok? [C]  
 2SG today not-go.to.school SFP 2SG why today not-go.to.school  
 ‘Why don’t you go to school today?’
- b. Nei gamjat m-faanhok **aa3.** ≠ Nei **dimgaai** gamjat m-faanhok? [C]  
 2SG today not-go.to.school SFP 2SG why today not-go.to.school  
 ‘You don’t go to school today.’ ≠ ‘Why don’t you go to school today?’

I have clarified the nature of the coordination between CP1 and DeFocP in RD. A question that arises is why DeFocP must be coordinated, given that fragment answers can stand alone and be licensed by preceding questions in an inter-sentential configuration. I suggest that this is due to a constraint that every sentence must contain a focus. As known as the “incompleteness effects”, many simple SVO sentences in Chinese do not sound natural or “complete” as in (91a) (% = “incomplete”). One way to salvage the sentence is by adding a contrast as in (91b) (Tang and Lee 2000; Sun 2022, *i.a.*).

- (91) Contrastive focus renders a sentence “complete” [M, same in C]
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a. %Zhangsan xie xin.<br>Zhangsan write letter<br>Int.: ‘Zhangsan writes/wrote letters.’<br>(Tang and Lee 2000, ex.1) | b. Ta xie xin, wo kan dianshi.<br>3SG write letter, 1SG watch TV<br>‘He will write letters, and I will watch TV.’<br>(Tang and Lee 2000, ex.26) |
|---|---|

Tang and Lee (2000) propose that every sentence must either be tensed *or* focused, the latter in the sense of anchoring an item/event with respect to a reference set of items/events. I take a step further and suggest that every sentence must *contain a focus*, tensed or not (see also Culicover and

35. I am very grateful to Tommy Tsz-Ming Lee who brought my attention to the explanation of this puzzle.

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Rochemont 1983; Gussenhoven 1983). When a narrow focus is absent, it is the whole sentence that serves as the (broad) focus. Since the (pronounced) material in DeFocP is defocused, focus anchoring fails. Therefore, DeFocP must be coordinated with another CP to form a sentence that can bear focus (i.e., in CP1).<sup>36</sup>

#### 4.5 Comparison with previous biclausal approaches

The current proposal adopts some features from previous proposals (e.g., Cheung 2015’s sluicing and T. T.-M. Lee 2017’s defocus movement), and two reviewers raise concerns on the novelty. It should be noted that the main goal of this paper is to adjudicate between the monoclausal and biclausal approaches for unifying GRD and DC, with rigorous empirical examination, rather than inventing an entirely new analysis out of the blue. That said, there are important differences of the current biclausal approach from previous ones. For one, the biclausal arguments in (§3) are largely unnoticed before. There is also a novel *analytical* aspect, namely, the introduction of empty categories into GRD in Chinese. This is, to the best of my knowledge, only mentioned in passing in Chan (2016, p.84) (for Cantonese) and Dong (2018, pp.22-23) (for Mandarin) without further investigation, and is even not dealt with in the major biclausal proposals by Cheung (2015) and Tang (2015a, 2018b). I have also shown how empty categories are relevant to GRD cross-linguistically, a rare exploration in previous proposals for Chinese in particular the monoclausal ones (e.g., Lai 2019 only mentions Cantonese).

Apart from empty categories, the current proposal also crucially differs from Cheung (2015) in having a coordinative structure of RD, instead of simple juxtaposition where the two chunks are not structurally related. The proposed analysis restricts the interpretative possibilities by recruiting specifying coordination :P (Ott and de Vries 2016) with novel semantic conditions proposed. Note that Tang (2015a, 2018b) also proposes coordination for RD, but his coordinator is a generalized one without restrictions on what can and cannot be coordinated.

Another unique aspect is the syntactic operations in the RD chunk. While Cheung (2015) proposes a combination of three operations: ellipsis, movement, and sluicing, I simplify it to only two steps: defocus movement (motivated independently by T. T.-M. Lee 2017) and sluicing. This is not just a Occam’s-Razor consideration, but also an empirical concern to account for the discontinuous strings in the RD chunks, as well as adverbial stranding to be discussed in §5.2. I have also formulated the identity condition on sluicing in RD. On the other hand, Tang (2015a, 2018b) only has one operation, deletion, in the RD chunk, which cannot capture the movement properties discussed in §2.1.

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36. One way to understand this constraint is to adopt the view that every utterance in a discourse is either posing a Question Under Discussion (QUD) or answering it by assertion (Roberts 1996). Since a question is a set of possible answers (i.e., an alternative set) following Hamblin’s semantics, both the questions and answers contain alternative-based focus. Such focus is banned in DeFocP, and thus DeFocP cannot be a standalone question/assertion. This suggestion is in line with Sun (2022)’s proposal for “incompleteness effects” tied to QUD-sensitivity.

To sum up this section, I have developed a biclausal approach that unifies GRD and DC and reduces their differences to the use of empty categories. In the next section, I review potential challenges to the biclausal approach and argue that none of them hold as counter-arguments.

## 5 Dissolving challenges to the biclausal approach

### 5.1 Focus association

A major difference between a monoclausal approach and the biclausal approach developed here concerns the operation on the remnant clause in the RD chunk—whether it is moved out or sluiced/elided. One of the earliest arguments against the biclausal approach, from Cheung (2009a, pp.212-214) and further discussed by Yip (2020, pp.75,82), is built on the difference between RD and ellipsis in focus association. First, they observe that *zinghai* ‘only’ in Cantonese cannot associate with silent materials, such as the null object in (92).<sup>37</sup> This is related to a general constraint that bans exclusive focus particles from associating with elided materials cross-linguistically (Beaver and Clark 2008; Bassi, Hirsch, and Trinh 2022).

- (92) Go bun siusyut hou hou-tai aa3. \*Zoengsaam **zinghai** ze-zo [DP \_] aa3. [C]  
 that CL novel very interesting SFP Zoengsaam only borrow-PFV SFP  
 Int.: ‘The novel is very interesting. Zoengsaam only borrowed THE NOVEL. [Zoengsaam did not borrow other novels.]’ (Cheung 2009a:213)

In RD, however, *zinghai* may be right-dislocated as in (93).<sup>38</sup> Cheung (2009a) and Yip (2020) take this to be evidence that no ellipsis/sluicing has occurred in the RD chunk, hence challenging the biclausal approach.

- (93) [Zoengsaam ze-zo [go bun siusyut]<sub>F</sub> aa3] **zinghai**. (GRD) [C]  
 Zoengsaam borrow-PFV that CL novel SFP only  
 ‘Zoengsaam only borrowed *the novel* (and nothing else).’

Nonetheless, this challenge applies equally to the monoclausal approach. What is overlooked by Cheung (2009a) and Yip (2020) is that *zinghai* ‘only’ also cannot associate with *moved* elements “backward”. Put differently, it cannot associate with *traces*. As shown in (94), the focused object cannot undergo topicalization, even though it independently allows reconstruction for reflexive binding and/or certain quantifier scope (see, e.g., Y.-H. A. Li 2000; Law and Pan 2023 for Mandarin; Yip and Ahenkorah 2023 for Cantonese). Again, it is a cross-linguistically robust that backward association is not

37. Null objects in Chinese may be analyzed as an empty category (Y.-H. A. Li 2005 *et seq.*) or a result of V-stranding VP ellipsis (H.-J. G. Li 2002; H. Pan 2019). See Liu (2024) for a recent ellipsis analysis with applicative head-licensing.

38. Cheung (2009a, p.213) notes that RD of *zhi* ‘only’ in Mandarin is marginally acceptable. My consultants reported that disyllabic *zhishi* ‘only, just’ significantly improved the judgment (see also Dong 2018:25).



possible with ‘only’, including English (Tancredi 1990; Beaver and Clark 2008; Erlewine 2014) and Vietnamese (Erlewine 2017b; Yip 2025a).

(94) Focus association fails with movement [C]

- a. Aaming **zinghai** m-zungji [ni zek gau]<sub>F</sub>. (Baseline)  
 Ming only not-like this CL dog  
 ‘Ming only doesn’t like *this dog*.’
- b. #[Ni zek gau]<sub>F</sub>, Aaming **zinghai** m-zungji \_\_. (Topicalization)  
 this CL dog Ming only not-like \_\_  
 Int.: ‘Ming only doesn’t like *this dog*.’ (ONLY: ‘This dog, Ming only doesn’t like.’)

To account for the exceptional focus association in RD, extra assumptions are needed in *both* monoclausal and biclausal approaches. For example, a monoclausal proponent may assume that the movement in RD is post-syntactic, such that when the syntactic structure is sent to the LF for focus association, the movement has not occurred. Such a PF movement view is proposed by Cheung (2011); but it does not extend to Lai (2019) and T. T.-M. Lee (2021a)’s monoclausal proposals that rely on *syntactic* copies to derive DC. On the other hand, a biclausal proponent may assume that sluicing, unlike ellipsis, occurs in the PF, following the lines of Merchant (2001). Focus association is again established in the LF before the sluicing occurs. Such a PF sluicing view has also been defended by Cheung (2015). This paper assumes the PF sluicing view. Therefore, focus association in RD does not form a counter-argument to the biclausal approach.<sup>39</sup>

## 5.2 Adverbial stranding

The second apparent challenge concerns another difference between RD and ellipsis, as observed by Lai (2019) and a reviewer. While adverbials cannot be stranded after VP ellipsis as in (95a), they may be stranded in RD such as (95b) (see Lu 1980 for Mandarin).

(95) Differences in adverbial stranding [C, same in M]

- a. Ngo jau sihaa, keoi **jau** \*(sihaa).  
 1SG again try 3SG again try  
 ‘Let me try, and let her try.’ (Lai 2019, ex.36)
- b. [Ngo jau sihaa sin] ngo **jau**.  
 1SG again try SFP 1SG again  
 ‘Let me try as well.’ (Lai 2019, ex.34)

39. See also Yip (2025b) for a solution using multidominance, which does not need to rely on the PF-movement/sluicing assumptions. Crucially, this solution is only compatible with a biclausal structure, but not a monoclausal one.

This contrast, however, is far from constituting a mature counter-argument. Indeed, it follows from the current proposal with sluicing (but not ellipsis), and even challenges Lai himself. First, it is well known that VP ellipsis requires head-licensing: a non-head node cannot be followed by elided materials (Johnson 2001; Merchant 2001; see Tsai 2015; Lee and Pan 2024 for Chinese), which explains why (95a) is ungrammatical. Second, adverbial stranding is possible in other sluicing-like constructions in Chinese. This includes fragment questions with a ‘why’ adverb in (96a) and fragment answers with a PP adverbial or a temporal adverb in (96b). These two constructions arguably involve a move-and-delete (sluicing) derivation (Wei 2013, 2016, 2018).

- (96) a. [Context: Someone said Ming will not come to the party.]  
 Dimgaai? / Weishenme? (fragment question/matrix sluicing) [C/M]  
 why why  
 ‘Why (will Ming not come to the party)?’
- b. [Q: When will Ming come to the party?]  
 A: Hai saamdin. Zau(faai) laa3. / Zai sandian. Henkuai le. (frag. answer) [C/M]  
 at 3 o’clock soon SFP at 3 o’clock soon SFP  
 ‘At three o’clock. Soon.’

As shown by the contrasts in (97)-(98), these adverbials resist stranding by VP ellipsis but allow for RD (see (89) above for ‘why’ adverbs in RD). This is correctly predicted by the current analysis where the RD chunk is derived by sluicing, without ellipsis (*contra*. Cheung 2015).

- (97) a. Zhangsan hui zai sandian lai. Lisi ye hui (\*zai sandian) lai. (ellipsis) [M]  
 Zhangsan will at 3 o’clock come Lisi also will at 3 o’clock  
 Int.: ‘Zhangsan will come at three o’clock. Lisi will as well.’
- b. [Lisi hui \_ lai a] zai sandian. (RD) [M]  
 Lisi will come SFP at 3 o’clock  
 ‘Lisi will come at 3 o’clock.’
- (98) a. Aaming zau(faai) lai. Aafan dou {\*zau/ ??zaufaai} lai. (ellipsis) [C]  
 Ming soon come Fan also soon soon  
 Int.: ‘Ming will soon come. Fan as well.’
- b. [Aafan \_ lai laa3] zau(faai). (RD) [C]  
 Fan come SFP soon  
 ‘Fan will come soon.’

Adverbial stranding also helps us to decide between different versions of monoclausal and/or biclausal analyses. Cheung (2015)’s biclausal account requires ellipsis before sluicing, and thus is inadequate in handling cases with only adverbials right-dislocated. Turning to the monoclausal approach, analyses with movement alone (e.g., Cheung 2009a; T. T.-M. Lee 2017; Yip 2020) handle these cases

well without extra assumptions, given that (i) adverbials may move,<sup>40</sup> and that (ii) adverbials can be followed by a trace (e.g., topicalizing a subject across a high adverb). On the other hand, adverbial stranding is problematic for Lai (2019)'s monoclausal approach with parallel copying and subsequent deletion in the DC chunk. Unlike sluicing, this deletion is in-situ (i.e., not move-and-delete), which is surprisingly similar to VP ellipsis. To explain adverbial stranding, Lai proposes that this deletion is "specific" (p.254) to DC and cannot be found in other constructions, enabled by a Given head that somehow does not need to be structurally adjacent to the elided materials.<sup>41</sup> Yet, this is not an explanation, but an unmotivated stipulation. Given the above parallelism with other sluicing-like constructions, there is no need to posit a new type of deletion operation that only applies to DC. Therefore, adverbial stranding not only is not a counter-argument to the proposed biclausal sluicing analysis, but it also raises challenges to certain monoclausal proposals.

### 5.3 The placement of SFPs

As observed as early as in Cheung (1997, pp.7,36-37)'s seminal work on Cantonese, SFPs (i) are generally preferred (if not required) at the end of main chunks (*cf.* Cheung 2005:9), and (ii) cannot be pronounced at the end of RD chunks. Similar points have also been made by Chiang (2017) for (Taiwan) Mandarin. These observations are picked up by Lai (2019) as counter-arguments against biclausality, as also pointed out by a reviewer.

- (99) a. ??<sub>[main ... (XP<sub>i</sub>) ... ]</sub> <sub>[RD XP<sub>i</sub> ]</sub> (only for Cantonese and Taiwan Mandarin)  
 b. \*<sub>[main ... (XP<sub>i</sub>) ... (SFP)]</sub> <sub>[RD XP<sub>i</sub> SFP ]</sub>  
 c. <sup>OK</sup><sub>[main ... (XP<sub>i</sub>) ... SFP ]</sub> <sub>[RD XP<sub>i</sub> ]</sub>

Consider the restriction (99a), exemplified in (100a). Lai questions that if SFPs can be absent in canonical sentences (=100b), it is not clear why (100a) is ungrammatical under the biclausal approach.

- (100) a. [Keoi zungji nei \*(aa3)] keoi. [C]  
           3SG like 2SG SFP 3SG  
           'S/he likes you.' (Lai 2019, ex.14)  
 b. Keoi zungji nei (aa3). [C]  
           3SG like 2SG SFP  
           'S/he likes you.' (Lai 2019, ex.75)

The empirical soundness of this restriction is, however, questionable. For one, Cheung (1997, p.7) and Luke (2000, p.305) report that there is SFP-less RD in Cantonese, though relatively rare (around 6% in Luke's corpus). (99a) is at best described as a (strong) preference in Cantonese, rather than a con-

40. See T. T.-M. Lee (2024, pp.157-158) for *jau* 'again' movement over quantificational subjects with semantic effects.

41. Lai even admits that if his deletion is the same as VP ellipsis, "the current deletion operation can only be restricted to DC cases via brute force" (p.255).

straint. Moreover, unlike Taiwan Mandarin, SFP-less RD is very productive in Mainland Mandarin, as discussed by Lu (1980) (with over 50 examples of SFP-less RD) and experimentally confirmed by Yip (2020). SFP-less RD is also attested in naturalistic spoken data in both languages:

- (101) a. Cin go-loeng nin dou zung duk-gan, zigei. (SFP-less GRD) [C]  
 before that-two year also still study-PROG self  
 ‘I myself was still studying in the past two years.’ (Luke 2000:305, from HKCanCor)
- b. Nimen yao gan shenme, nimen? (SFP-less DC) [M]  
 2PL want do what 2PL  
 ‘What do you want to?’ (Chen 2016:83, from TV drama *We Love You, Mr. Jin*)

Since SFPs are not obligatory in RD, I do not regard Lai’s argument to be valid. Indeed, those attested SFP-less RD cases pose problems for his approach.<sup>42</sup> For why SFPs are usually preferred in Cantonese but not in Mainland Mandarin, see Yip (2020) for an explanation based on the prosodic difference of intonations in the two languages and RD being one intonational phrase.

The second restriction (99b) is that SFPs cannot occur at the end of RD chunks, which is true across the languages/dialects under discussion:

- (102) a. \*Hoi saam-go wui gwaa3, keoi gamjat **aa1 maa3**. (GRD) [C]  
 open three-CL meeting SFP 3SG today SFP SFP  
 ‘S/he had three meetings today.’ (Cheung 2009a:202)
- b. \*Ni xiang qisi wo (ma), ni **ma**? (DC) [M]  
 2SG want grieve me SFP 2SG SFP  
 ‘Do you want to grieve me?’ (Chen 2016:19)

A reviewer suggests that (99b) challenges the biclausal approach. However, again, it is not clear how this can be a counter-argument. Under the current sluicing account, the RD chunk raises above the CP to DeFocP, and the CP with SFPs contained is deleted, as illustrated in (103). That DeFocP is above CP is motivated empirically by RD’s root phenomenon status (see §2.1). Hence, (99b) naturally follows from the biclausal approach.

- (103) a. [<sub>P</sub> [<sub>CP1</sub> ... SFP] : [<sub>DeFocP</sub> XP<sub>i</sub> DeFoc [<sub>CP2</sub> SFP [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>XP</sub> ... ] ] ] ]  
 ↑  
 b. [<sub>P</sub> [<sub>CP1</sub> ... SFP] : [<sub>DeFocP</sub> XP<sub>i</sub> DeFoc [<sub>CP2</sub> SFP [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>XP</sub> ... ] ] ] ]

This SFP restriction is only a problem in a biclausal analysis without sluicing, such as Tang (2015a, 2018b)’s generalized coordination. Cheung (2015)’s sluicing account also derives this restriction, as admitted by Lai (2019, pp.266-268). Lai turns out to only formulate it as a conceptual argument, raising concerns on the obligatoriness of sluicing. Yet, it is cross-linguistically common to have obligatory

42. Lai suggests only overt SFPs obligatorily moves TP to SpecCP.

sluicing-like operations, such as stripping in English like (104). I thus conclude that SFP placement in RD is not at all a challenge to the current approach.

- (104) a. John ate sashimi, but not [<sub>FP</sub> **sushi** [<sub>TP</sub> John ate    ]]. (stripping)  
 b. \*John ate sashimi, but not [<sub>FP</sub> **sushi** [<sub>TP</sub> John ate    ]].  
 (Yoshida, Nakao, and Ortega-Santos 2014:196-197)

## 5.4 Embedded subjects in DC

The last apparent challenge to a biclausal approach is by Lai (2019), who claims that embedded subjects resist DC in Cantonese, as also pointed out by a reviewer for Mandarin. For Lai, this follows from his “DC-specific” deletion that only targets constituents—without movement of the embedded subject, one cannot delete the rest of the matrix and embedded clauses as a whole.

- (105) Keoi zidou [**ngo** zungji nei] me1 {keoi/ \***ngo**? [C]  
 3SG know 1SG like 2SG SFP 3SG 1SG  
 ‘Is it true that he knows that I like you?’ (Lai 2019, ex.46a)

Nonetheless, the empirical ground of this restriction is, again, shaky. There are a number of attested DC examples with embedded subjects reported in the literature (Meng 1982:175, Chen 2016:79-80,85, Chiang 2022:4, see also Cheung 2015:243 who only reports marginality but not unacceptability). Two naturally-occurring examples are given in (106) (see also (8b) above):

- (106) a. [Nei zi-m-zi [**ni-di** zanhai hou san] gaa3] **ni-di** **saam**? [C]  
 2SG know-not-know this-CL.PL really very new SFP this-CL.PL clothes  
 ‘Do you know these are really new, these clothes?’ (Facebook video, 2015-8-10)  
 b. [Wo zhen mei xiangdao [**ni** neng ganchu zhe-zhong shangfengbaisu de  
 1SG really not.PFV think 2SG can do such breach.of.morality DE  
 shi] a], **ni**! [M]  
 thing SFP 2SG  
 ‘I really cannot imagine you commit such a breach of morality!’  
 (Chen 2016:85, from TV drama *We Love You, Mr. Jin*)

The above examples immediately dissolve the challenge to the biclausal approach, and they are also counter-examples to Lai’s monoclausal approach. Indeed, a closer look at Lai’s example (105) reveals that it is confounded by factive islands under affirmative *zidou* ‘know’: relativization is also blocked as in (107).

- (107) \*Go-go [keoi zidou [<sub>i</sub> zungji nei]] ge **jan**<sub>i</sub> lai-zo me1? [C]  
 that-CL 3SG know like 2SG GE person come-PFV SFP  
 Int: ‘Did that person who s/he knows likes you come?’

## 5.5 Weighing biclausality over monoclausality

Taking stock, I have carefully reviewed all major challenges to the biclausal approach and concluded that none of them hold as a valid counter-argument, empirically or conceptually. Some of them even raise issues for certain monoclausal proposals and further strengthen the parallelism between RD and sluicing. Together with the extensive biclausal arguments in §3, the proposed unified biclausal approach enjoys the maximal explanatory power among all other major monoclausal/biclausal proposals, as summarized in Table 2.<sup>43</sup>

Properties of RD		Monoclausal			Biclausal		
		Cheung09/11	Lee17/21	Lai19/24	Cheung15	Tang15/18	This paper
Major (§2)	(Non-)constituency in RD chunks	✓	✓	✗ <sub>DC</sub>	✓	✓	✓
	(Non-)constituency in main chunks	✗	✓	✓	(✓)	(✓)	✓
	Movement properties	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	(De)focus	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	(✓)	✓
	Root phenomenon	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Biclausal (§3)	Imperfect copying	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
	Licensing/binding asymmetries	✗	✗	✗	(✓)	(✓)	✓
	No polarity reversal	✗	✗	✗	(✓)	(✓)	✓
	Parallel referential potential to <i>pro</i>	✗	✗	✗	(✓)	(✓)	✓
	SFP cluster ordering	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Other (§5)	‘Only’ in RD chunks	✓ <sub>PF</sub>	✗	✗	✓ <sub>PF</sub>	✗	✓ <sub>PF</sub>
	Stranded adverbs in RD chunks	✓	✓	✗ <sub>stipulate</sub>	✗	(✓)	✓
	No SFPs in RD chunks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓

Table 2: Comparison of monoclausal and biclausal approaches to RD (final version)

I wrap up this section by discussing a curious difference between GRD and DC that appears to be an issue for the current unified approach. Cheung (2015) and Lai (2019) observe that objects, unlike subjects, cannot be “copied” in DC, as in (108). Chen (2016) also finds the same object restriction in Mandarin. This is different from GRD where objects can be displaced (see §2.1).

- (108) [Aaming dou faan-zo **ukkei** laa3] {Aaming /**\*ukkei**}. [C, same in M]  
 Ming also return-PFV home SFP Ming home  
 ‘Ming also returned home.’ (Cheung 2015:248)

43. For space reasons, full discussion of the comparison cannot be included here. “(✓)” indicates properties that do not fall out straightforwardly from a given proposal but are in principle compatible with it with extra ingredients (e.g., empty categories).

For them, the object restriction is the crucial motivation for ellipsis (in-situ deletion) in DC since deletion only targets constituents (i.e., \* $[S-V [O]]$ ). A sluicing-only account does not predict the ungrammaticality of (108), since the remnant clause is a constituent after the object moves out.

Nevertheless, there are good reasons to believe that this restriction is not about constituency but about linear order. T. T.-M. Lee (2021a) observes that Cantonese DC is not possible only if the “copied” material is too close to the correlate, informally speaking. That is,  $X-Y-SFP-X$  is possible but  $*X-Y-SFP-Y$  is not. For example, object DC is indeed acceptable when a duration phrase follows the object in the main chunk (i.e.,  $S-V-O-DurP-SFP-O$ ), as in (109).<sup>44</sup> These cases are problematic for Cheung, Chen and Lai, whose accounts predict object DC to be always impossible.<sup>45</sup>

- (109) [Aaming tai-zo **ni-bun syu** saam-go zung laa3] **ni-bun syu**. [C]  
 Ming read-PFV this-CL book three-CL hour SFP this-CL book  
 ‘Ming read this book for three hours.’ (T. T.-M. Lee 2021a:122)

T. T.-M. Lee (2021a) proposes a Cyclic Linearization account, which, simplifying a lot here, requires copying to occur only if new linear order possibilities are established (without counting SFPs). In (109), copying is made possible by the relative order between the object and DurP, which is not the case in (108) with clause-final objects. Similar patterns have also been observed for verbs including intransitive ones (T. T.-M. Lee 2021a:120–121), further suggesting that the restriction is not about objects or constituency (i.e.,  $^{OK}[S [V]]$ ). To the best of my knowledge, this is the only observed pattern that cannot be derived from a biclausal approach without stipulations. For now, I speculate that the ban on this “near-adjacent” copying is due to a phonological pressure to avoid repeating identical strings that are too close with each other (as an extension of Identity Avoidance in Tang 2000). Potential support comes from grammatical cases of object DC reported in the literature, but with *imperfect* copying such as (110), a corpus example (Guo 1999; see also Chiang 2017:305).<sup>46</sup>

- (110) [Context: If it (this balance-weight) still doesn’t obey me, ...]  
 [Wo jiu zai-le **ta<sub>i</sub>**], **zhe-ge chengtuo<sub>i</sub>**. [M]  
 1SG then kill-PFV 3SG this-CL balance-weight  
 ‘... then I’ll kill it, this balance-weight.’ (adapted from Guo 1999:1113)

Despite the hiccup raised by object restrictions, I hope the comprehensive review above shows that the biclausal approach has a much wider empirical coverage than the monoclausal one concerning both the properties reported and those unnoticed before.

44. Judgment confirmed by my 12 Cantonese consultants.

45. Lai (2024), as a reply to T. T.-M. Lee (2021a), attempts to challenge his data using an acceptability judgment task, but it gives mixed results. Only 60% of his subjects found (109) unnatural (rating: 1 or 2, on a scale from 1-4) but 40% found it natural (rating: 3 or 4). Lai’s objection, if ever successful, only boils down to a concern on individual variations. Lai also omits important evidence for Lee’s proposal, such as the restrictions on verbs mentioned below.

46. Another suggestive evidence is that objects can freely undergo perfect copying in SOV languages like Japanese (Tanaka 2001:552), where the copied object is separated with the correlate by a verb (in addition to the SFP).

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## 6 Conclusion

To conclude, this paper has revisited the clausality debate in right dislocation constructions in Cantonese and Mandarin. I have provided a number of novel arguments that GRD, gapped right dislocation, and DC, dislocation copying, both have a biclausal structure. Incorporating insights from Cheung (2015) and Ott and de Vries (2016), I proposed a uniform biclausal approach to RD where the two chunks are asymmetrically coordinated to form :P (de Vries 2006, 2009's specifying coordination), and the RD chunks undergo movement with deletion of the remnant clausal structure. The difference between GRD and DC can be explained by the use of empty categories in the main chunks. This connection between GRD and empty categories has been largely underappreciated in previous studies of Chinese RD. Resorting to empty categories captures the range of possible variants of GRD, as well as the correlation that only null argument languages (e.g., Chinese, Japanese and Korean) allow argument GRD. The proposal not only is far more empirically adequate than a monoclausal approach to Chinese RD, but also resonates with the biclausal approach to RD in other languages (Germanic languages: Ott and de Vries 2016; Japanese: Tanaka 2001; Korean: Park and Kim 2009; Mongolian: T. T.-M. Lee 2023; Romance languages: Fernández-Sánchez 2017). I hope that the inclusion of Chinese RD to this picture illustrates deeper underlying universals and the nature of cross-linguistic variation in this domain.

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