Right dislocation as multidominance, and beyond

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This study argues for a novel multidominant approach to right dislocation (RD), drawing data primary from Cantonese (CC) and Mandarin (MC), as well as Japanese (JP). The crucial evidence comes from focus/*wh*-association of 'only'/'(wh-)the-hell' expressions in RD, which challenges current monoclausal movement and biclausal sluicing approaches, but naturally falls out from a multidominant structure. Additional support from parallelism with Right-Node-Raising (RNR) is also offered.

❶ **A puzzle on focus/*wh*-association.** Exclusive focus particles like *zinghai* [CC] 'only' may be RD-ed and associate "leftward" with the focus in the main chunk (dated back to Cheung 1997:66), as in (1). Similarly, 'the-hell' expressions like *daodi* [MC] (Huang and Ochi 2004; Law 2008) may be RD-ed with its associated *wh*-word on the left (Cheung 2009), as in (2).

(1) [Aaming zungji __ *nibun syu*F zaa3] **zinghai**. (Obj focus)
     Ming   like   this book SFP only
     'Ming only likes *this book*.' [CC]

(2) [__ *Shei* hui lai   a] **daodi**? (*Wh*-Subj)
          who will come SFP the.hell
     'Who the hell will come?' [MC]

As I will demonstrate in ❷-❸ below, also argued by various authors (see citations below), 'only/the-hell' *cannot* associate with **silent** materials and have the licensing condition in (3). In RD, the required configuration is that they need to c-command the leftward associates as in (4).

(3) The command requirement:
     'Only'/'the-hell' expressions must *c-command* the **pronounced** copy of their focus/*wh*-associate.

(4) The required licensing configuration in RD

[main ... focus/wh ...] SFP [RD 'only'/'the hell']
         ↑_____c-command_____|
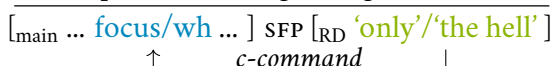
There are two major approaches to RD: (i) a monoclausal structure with leftward movement (Cheung 2009; Lee 2017, *i.a.*), as in (5); and (ii) a biclausal structure with sluicing in CP2 (Cheung 2015; Yip 2024), as in (6). Neither approaches, however, generate the licensing configuration (4). Under both approaches, the focus/*wh*-associates c-commanded by 'only/the-hell' are either traces or elided/sluiced, and 'only/the-hell' do not c-command the pronounced associates in the main chunk, as in (7).
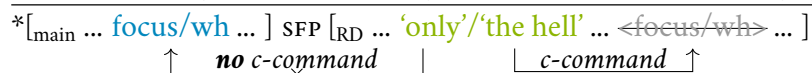
(5) Monoclausal movement (RD-mvt + TP mvt)

[CP Δ SFP [Δ... [TP 'only/the-hell'...focus/*wh*]]]]
     ↑   ↑

(6) Biclausal sluicing (RD-mvt + TP sluicing (shaded))

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

(7) The illicit configuration created by current movement/sluicing approaches

*[main ... focus/wh ...] SFP [RD ... 'only'/'the hell' ... ~~<focus/wh>~~ ...]
         ↑   **no** *c-command* | | *c-command* ↑

                                                      but fails to associate w/ silent materials

This problem is not specific to Chinese, but general to languages with such association in RD, like Japanese where *ittai* 'the-hell' (Huang and Ochi 2004) may be RD-ed (=8).

(8) *Dare*-ga ki-ta n-da, **ittai**?
who-NOM come-PST NMLZ-COP the.hell
'Who the hell came?' [JP]

❷ **Not movement.** As a cross-linguistically robust generalization, focus cannot move out of the scope of 'only' (Jackendoff 1972; Tancredi 1990; Erlewine 2014, *i.a.*), as in (9). Put differently, the associate cannot be "reconstructed" back. The same goes for 'the-hell' expressions (Huang and Ochi 2004), as in (10). It has nothing to do with the nature of movement. Besides topicalization below, relativization (A'), focus movement (A') and raising (A) also fail to license such association, although they allow for vanilla reconstruction (e.g., for quanitifers & anaphors; Y.-h. A. Li 2000; Law and Pan 2023). **Since 'only/the-hell' can't associate with traces, (leftward) movement can't explain the association in RD.**

(9)* *Ni zek gau*$_F$, Aaming **zinghai** m-zungji _ aa3.
this CL dog Ming only not-like _ SFP
Int.: 'Ming only doesn't like *this dog*.' [CC]

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

❸ **Not sluicing/ellipsis.** Cross-linguistically, again, focus associates of 'only' cannot be elided (Beaver and Clark 2008; Bassi, Hirsch, and Trinh 2022; CC: Cheung 2009:213), as in (11). As for *wh*-words, independently, they may be elided in fragment questions which have a sluicing syntax (H. Li 2015; Wei 2018). However, the *wh*-associates of 'the-hell' cannot be elided there in (13) like focus associates. **Since the associates of 'only/the-hell' can't be elided, biclausal-sluicing also can't explain the association in RD.**

(11) Aaming **zinghai** wui maai *siusyut*$_F$. *Aafan dou **zinghai** wui [$_{VP}$ ~~maai siusyut$_{[F]}$~~]
Ming only will buy novel Fan also only will
'Ming will only buy novels. Fan as well.' [CC]

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

(13) Na ni {mingtian/ ***daodi**} ~~qu na~~ ne?
then 2SG tomorrow/ the.hell go where SFP
'Where(*the-hell) will you go (tmr)?' [MC]

❹ **RD as multidominance.** I argue the puzzle of focus/*wh*-association in RD can be resolved by multidominance. **First**, I assume RD to be biclausal (Cheung 2015; Yip 2024: MC/CC; Tanaka 2001; Abe 2019: JP): two CPs are coordinated by a silent conjunction **:** (Ott and de Vries 2016). The RD element in the CP2 moves to the left periphery (*cf.* Cheung 2015; Lee 2017 for mvt. evidence). **Second**, adopting Citko (2005)'s "node sharing"/Parallel Merge, I propose that CP2 shares every node with CP1 except for the RD element(s) that undergo(es) movement, as illustrated in (14). These kinds of "non-bulk sharing" structures are not ad-hoc but independently motivated by conjoined *wh*-questions (e.g., Gračanin-Yuksek 2007).

(14) <u>A schematic multidominant structure of RD</u>
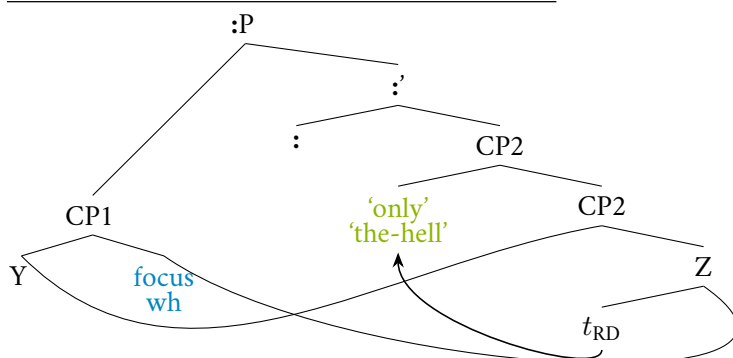
Since CP1 and CP2 share the same nodes, the nodes only pronounce once and form the main chunk. Therefore, there is no silent structure resulting from Copy Deletion (traces) or ellipsis. More importantly, **'only/the-hell' in (14) now c-commands the focus/*wh*-associates in the main chunk** (*à la* Wilder 1999's c-command in multidominance), satisfying (3) for the association in RD. **Q.E.D.**

❺ **Against a rightward movement alternative.** Another way to form (4) to satisfy (3) is to have a *monoclausal* structure with *rightward* movement of 'only/the-hell' (i.e., extraposition). This alternative is already disputed by Cheung (2009). Moreover, RD may be long-distance (Lee 2017) and is not subject to Right Roof Constraint (Ross 1967). Additionally, a recent study by Yip (2024) shows convincingly that there are a number of binding and *wh*/NPI-licensing asymmetries that can only be derived from a biclausal structure. I therefore conclude that this alternative is untenable.

❻ **Parallel with Right-Node Raising (RNR).** RNR is analyzed with multidominance (Wilder 1999; Belk, Neeleman, and Philip 2023; MC: Cheng 2009). Similar focus association should also be possible, which is borne out in (15). 'Only' in 1st-conjunct can only associate with the pronounced object in 2nd-conjunct. This is exactly what a multidominant structure with a shared object node by two TPs derives in (16).

(15) [Aaming **zinghai** zungji _] ji   [Aafan **zinghai** toujim *nibun syu*$_F$]
     Ming   only   like   but Fan   only   hate   this book
     'Ming only likes, but Fan only hates, *this book*.'   [CC]

(16) ['only' ...] & ['only' ... focus]
       c-command   *c-command*

❼ **Conclusion.** The novel multidominant approach to RD resolves a long-standing puzzle that is not accounted for by the major existing approaches. The findings suggest that focus/*wh*-association serves as a reliable diagnostics for multidominance beyond RD to RNR and possibly other constructions.

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