Going Right? Double Down!

Mandarin Right Dislocation

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April 8, 2018
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1 Introduction

This paper investigates the syntactic structure of Mandarin Right Dislocation, a phenomenon where one or more segments appears after the rightmost position of the sentence, apparently under some restrictions of rules. This paper only discusses the situation when exactly one segment is thus dislocated.

I propose a unified theory to Right Dislocation phenomena, which can account for similar right dislocation phenomena in all languages whose such phenomena have so far been documented and well studied.

Right Dislocation frequently occurs in Mandarin speech but has received little attention in Chinese linguistics. This paper aims to give a satisfactory account of the phenomenon, both of its mechanism and of its distribution. Moreover, our theory of Mandarin Right Dislocation will also provide substantial evidence for the nature of other Mandarin syntactic structures.

Below is an example of RD (the Right Dislocated part italicized):

(1) a. nǐ nánpéngyou lái-le ma (conventional order)
   2s boyfriend come-PFV Q.Y/N
   “Has your boyfriend come yet?”

b. lái-le ma nǐ nánpéngyou (RD)
   come-PFV Q.Y/N 2s boyfriend
   “Has he come yet, your boyfriend?”

I propose that Mandarin RD results from two underlying clauses, with various movement and deletion (or ellipsis; see Merchant (2004) and Arregi (2007)) such as sluicing and VP-deletion, similar to the proposals of Tanaka (2001) and Ott (2012), Ott (2015).

Similar phenomena have been reported in Cantonese, Japanese, and Korean, as well as in many Indo-European languages such as English, German, and Dutch. As will be discussed below, Mandarin RD is much like the those of Cantonese, Japanese and Korean (for Japanese see Tanaka (2001), Takita (2011), Takita (2014), Kawahara (2012), Kuno (1978); for Korean see Yun (2014), Yim (2013); for Cantonese see Law (2003), Cheung (1997), Cheung (2009)). RD in Mandarin is allowed in far more situations than in languages such as English, German and Dutch (for Dutch see Ott (2012); for German and Dutch see Ott (2015)).

For data and other studies of Mandarin RD, see Lu (1980), Guo (1999).

Finally, Mandarin almost only appears in spoken Mandarin. It is not accepted in written registers, unless for transcription of spoken material or as an approximation to speaking.
2 Identification of Mandarin Right Dislocation

Four clues indicate the presence of RD. They are (1) positioning of sentence-final particles, (2) phonetic stress, (2) semantic emphasis, and (4) restorability. We will discuss them below.

For simplicity, we call the Right Dislocated segment(s) Dislocated, and the front part Precedent.

2.1 After your high-SFP!

Mandarin has a class of words called Sentence Final Particles. One can divide them into two classes, low SFPs and high SFPs. Any Right Dislocated part must occur after any high SFPs.

Erlewine (2017) notes that Mandarin SFPs occupy two kinds of positions, one class occupying the right VP periphery, and the other residing at the CP level. Erlewine calls the former low SFPs, and the latter high SFPs.

The low SFPs are restrictive markers. They include two subclasses occupying different specific positions, one being aspectual markers such as the durative marker ne (see also Paul (2014), Paul (2015); for the aspect see Constant (2011)), and the other being a focusing morpheme éryì (see also Erlewine (2010)).

The high SFPs are apparently sentential markers. They are likewise divided into two subclasses; one carries semantic force acting on the entire clause such as the polar question marker ma, and the other consists of attitude markers, such as ya which softens the tone.

The dislocated part in Mandarin must occur after any high SFPs. So, while (1b) is acceptable, (2) is not. The sentence is ungrammatical either when the Dislocated appears before any high SFP or when a high SFP is Right Dislocated.

(2) lái-le nǐ nánpéngyou ma/ma
come-PFV 2s boyfriend Q.Y/N

"Has he come yet, your boyfriend?"

Low SFPs can in fact be Right Dislocated, as shown in (3).

(3) a. chī-wán fàn le qù sān-sān bù ba
eat-FIN meal REA go take a short walk HORT

"(Now that we’re) done with the meal, why don’t we go (out) for a short walk?"

b. qù sān-sān bù ba chī-wán fàn le
go take a short walk HORT eat-FIN meal REA
In (4), the reality aspect marker\(^1\) le is a low SFP (an aspect marker), whereas ba is a high SFP (a clausal marker). As (3b) shows, the low SFP le participates in RD, and occurs after the high SFP. Thus, low SFPs are not an identifier for Right Dislocation.

In this paper, the glossing of SFP indicates a high SFP.

2.2 Phonetic de-emphasis

The precedent receives any phonetic stress. The Dislocated is always given less stress and may have faster prosody. These are a reliable clue, as usually no pause occurs in between the Precedent and the Dislocated.

This allows us to identify instances of Right Dislocation with no difference in the apparent word order, such as (4b).

(4) a. wǒ jiàng-guò \(^3\) nèi ge rén (conventional order)
   1S see-EXP that CL person
   "I've seen that person."

b. wǒ jiàng-guò nèi ge rén (RD)
   1S see-EXP that CL person

Even though the surface word order is the same, we still know that (4b) has Right Dislocation from the weaker stress pattern of the Dislocated.

2.3 Semantic de-emphasis

What is considered semantically important, focused, or otherwise emphasized is not Right Dislocated. On the other hand, segments Right Dislocated usually contain information that is secondary in some ways, such as being given. An example is (5). (5a) is a question, and (5b-d) are different versions of the same answer.

\(^1\)The REALITY aspect indicates the action’s status of having become (part of the) reality. The terminology is due to Dai (1997), along with detailed discussion (in Mandarin). This particle is homophonous with the perfective particle, both le. The former occurs after the entire VP, whereas the latter occurs immediately after the V. When no audible segment intervenes in between, only one of them is spelled out. i.e. the potential sequence \(^*V\text{le}\text{le}\) does not occur, but \(V\text{le}\). Such configuration is ambiguous and can be any of the three possible combinations in the right context (perfective, reality, both). In such cases I gloss the le as the perfective particle uniformly, unless the context clearly rules out the existence of the perfective aspect.

\(^3\)Experiential.
(5) a. nǐ shēnmeshí hui lái ne 2s when POT come Q,Y/N
    “When will you come?”

b. wǒ míngtian hui lái (conventional order) 1s tomorrow POT come
    “I’ll come tomorrow.”

c. míngtian ba wǒ hui lái (RD) come UCTN 1s POT come
    “Tomorrow, I think, is when I’ll come.”

d. ’wǒ hui lái ba míngtian (RD) 1s POT come UCTN tomorrow
    “I’ll come, I think, tomorrow.”

The high SFP ba marks the speaker’s uncertainty. While either of (5b-c) may be an answer to (5a), (5d) is not an acceptable answer, which Right Dislocates the information in question.

2.4 Restorability

For each sentence with RD, there is a sentence without RD such that the meanings of the two sentences are basically the same.

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5 Potentiality
3 Other characteristics of Mandarin RD

This section discusses some additional features of Mandarin RD.

3.1 Constituency

The minimal unit Mandarin RD operates on is the constituent. So, for example, a single word cannot be broken up, such as in (6):

(6) a. 'nǐ nán lái-le ma péngyou
   2S B come-PFV Q.Y/N F
b. 'nǐ péngyou lái-le ma nán
   2S F come-PFV Q.Y/N B

   “Has your boyfriend come yet?”

The Dislocated may also be more than a constituent. It is in fact possible to Right Dislocate a segment that is very unlikely to be one constituent, such as in (7b) and (8c).

(7) a. wǒ tīngshuō tāmen dāngshí yījīng zōu-le ya (c.o.)
   1s hear(say) 3PL back then already leave-PFV SFP

   “I heard they had already left by then.”

b. yījīng zōu-le ya wǒ tīngshuō tāmen dāngshí (RD)
   already leave-PFV SFP 1s hear(say) 3PL back then

The syntactic tree for (7a) is as follows (irrelevant structures collapsed⁶):

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⁶This syntactic tree is binary-branching and follows the model of cartography (see Shlonsky 2010; Cinque & Rizzi 2008); hence the higher level phrases in the embedded clause are marked as AdvPs instead of VPs. This labelling is merely a theoretical issue and does not affect the hierarchical ordering and structure.
Clearly, in (7b), the Dislocated cannot form a constituent. While we can analyze the Precedent as having a single highest node, that would require us to posit a PRO as follows:

We posit an IP level (or one equivalent) to accommodate the Subject PRO, because otherwise the argument of the verb zōu "leave" would not be saturated.

Similarly, consider (8). This example is adapted from Lu (1980).
(8) a. nǐ yǒu mǎi-le xīe shénme
tagago buy-PFV PL what
  “So what stuff did you buy this time?”

  b. PRO jiù mǎi-le [liǎngjīn [shuǐguǒr]] (conventional order)
       just buy-PFV 1 kg fruit
  “Just bought a kilogram of fruits.”

  c. shuǐguǒ PRO jiù mǎi-le liǎngjīn (RD)
       fruit just buy-PFV 1 kg
  “Fruits, just bought a kilogram of those.”

Again, for (8c), the segment in the Dislocated cannot form a single node, especially
as the NP head of the Object, shuǐguǒ “fruits”, is missing.

  We shall henceforth call such RD multi-constituent RD (MCRD).

3.2 Optional vacancy

The position occupied by the Right Dislocated segment in the Precedent (henceforth, the
corresponding position, or CPIP) need not be empty. So, for example, (9) is possible and
grammatical:

(9) a. nǐ qù nǎ'r le nǐ
tagago go (to) REA 2s
  “Where were you?”

An overtly different segment with the same referent can also occupy the corresponding
position. So, for example, sentences like (10a-c) are grammatical also:

(10) a. tā, lái-le ma [nǐ nánpéngyou]
tagago come-PFV Q/Y/N 2s boyfriend
  “Has he, come yet, [your boyfriend]?"

b. tā [[bēi [PRO]] [dā-le]] [bēi [nèijiāhuò]]
tagago PAS PAS that one
  “He got beaten, by that person.”
We shall henceforth refer to this kind of Right Dislocation as **Repetitive Right Dislocation (RRD)**.

### 3.3 Scoping

#### 3.3.1 C-command

The Dislocated may either c-command or be c-commanded by the Precedent, such as (11).

(11) a. [tāmen jīgè]s̄ hùxiāngs̄ rēns̄hi de ya
    3PL several each other know DECL SFP

    “They all know each other.”

b. hùxiāngs̄ rēns̄hi de ya [tāmen jīgè]s̄
    each other know DECL SFP 3PL several

c. [tāmen jīgè]s̄ rēns̄hi de ya hùxiāngs̄
    3PL several know DECL SFP each other

This clearly rules out any base-generation hypothesis of Right Dislocation – the placement decision mechanism for the Dislocated would be too incredible.

### 3.4 Long-distance

Right Dislocation can operate long-distance, as shown in (12).

(12) a. tā shuō-guo [nǐ dú-guo nèibènshū]cp ma (c.o.)
    3s say-EXP 2s read-EXP that book Q.Y/N

    “Did s/he say that you’ve read the book?”

b. tā shuō-guo [nǐ dú-guo]s̄ ma nèibènshū (RD)
    3s say-EXP 2s read-EXP Q.Y/N that book
4 Analysis

4.1 Multi-clausal interface hypothesis

We propose that Mandarin RD is produced by an RD node higher than S or CP nodes, which takes two S or CP nodes where one’s truth condition or felicity condition contains the other’s, conjoins the nodes, and licenses fragmentation in the first clause as well as topicalization in the second clause. The RD node operates via the constraint that the primary (most important, or new) declarative information occurs in the first surfacing maximal projection of the resulting sentence. The constituent carrying identical information is optionally (but commonly) deleted.

This necessary generalization to account for Mandarin data allows us to explain the discrepancies of Mandarin RD with similar phenomena in other languages, and coincidentally these very phenomena as well. Multi-constituent right dislocation occurs in Mandarin but is not reported in other languages because in those languages the RD node only licenses topicalization but not fragmentation. Thus, since only one non-declarative node such as DP, NP, or AdvP can be topicalized, these languages necessarily do not exhibit multi-constituent right dislocation.

We first return to the problematic case of multi-constituent Right Dislocation discussed in (7) and (8). Below we analyze the case of (7), reproduced here.

(13) a. wǒ tīngshuō tāmen dāngshí yǐjīng zǒu-le ya (c.o.)
    1s hear 3PL back then already leave-PFV SFP

    “I heard they had already left by then.”

b. yǐjīng zǒu-le ya wǒ tīngshuō tāmen dāngshí (RD)
    already leave-PFV SFP 1s hear 3PL back then

We begin with the bi-clausal sentence of (14a). In this case, we select the initial clause, and target the S node of the subordinate clause, as (14b) shows. After deletion in (14c), we arrive, correctly, at (14d).
In (14d), deletion occurs not to the corresponding S node in the other clause, but a lower AdvP node. This is because we delete under the principle of non-repetition; The only part in the other clause with repetitive information is the lower AdvP node, instead of the S node. Deleting the S node would delete unrepeat new information, which would not be allowed under our rules for RD.
Below is an example of selecting the second clause.

(15) a. Bi-clausal sentence: [[[zhāngsān]_{NP} [gěi-le līsī [PRO]_{NP} [VP le]_{IP} ya]_S
give-PFV that book REA SFP}
[[[zhāngsān]_{NP} [gěi-le līsī [nēibēnrshū]_{NP} [VP le]_{IP} ya]
give-PFV that book REA SFP

"Zhangsan has given Lisi a book."

b. Primary information: [[[zhāngsān]_{NP} [gěi-le līsī [PRO]_{NP} [VP le]_{IP} give-PFV REA

‘Zhangsan has given Lisi’

c. Secondary information: [nēibēnrshū]_{NP}
that book

‘that book’

d. Topicalization: [[[zhāngsān]_{NP} [gěi-le līsī [PRO]_{NP} [VP le]_{IP} ya]_S
give-PFV that book REA SFP
[[[nēibēnrshū]_{NP} [zhāngsān]_{NP} [gěi-le līsī]_{VP} le]_{IP} ya]_CP_S
that book give-PFV REA SFP

f. Output: [[[zhāngsān]_{NP} [gěi-le līsī [PRO]_{NP} [VP le]_{IP} ya]_S
give-PFV REA SFP
[[[nēibēnrshū]_{NP}]_S
that book

§4.2 describes the semantic precondition for two clauses to be conjoinable for MRD.
The PRO is silent; §4.3 will demonstrate its existence in the Precedent. This justifies the choice of the S node instead of the AdvP node in (14b) (preserving PRO), and the choice in (15b) to begin with an initial clause with an explicit PRO instead of just a copy of a book (which would end up deleted by referential identity of information anyway).

In §4.4, I will show the necessity of Topicalization for the second clause.

In §4.5, I will show the necessity of permitting ellipsis in the first clause, which crucially departs from the analyses of Ott (2012) and Tanaka (2001)’s.
In §4.6, I will discuss a configuration of phrasal heads that accommodates for the preservation and elimination of high SFPs.

Finally, in §4.7, I will show that RD generally cannot be movement starting with a single clause, as much as it may be the most intuitive hypothesis.

4.2 Semantic precondition: harmonic and compatible

This section formulates explicitly the semantic condition of Mandarin Right Dislocation. Two clauses $A$ and $B$ may be adjoined only if their truth conditions (or felicity condition, ibid.) are compatible. That is, only if the truth conditions of $A$ and $B$, $\tau_A$ and $\tau_B$, satisfy $\tau_A \cap \tau_B \neq \emptyset$. Stated differently, only if, for every aspect $i$ of their truth conditions $\tau_A$ and $\tau_A$, there is always either $\tau_{A_i} \subseteq \tau_{B_i}$ or $\tau_{B_i} \subseteq \tau_{A_i}$. The most restrictive truth condition (or interpretation) is the truth condition (or interpretation) of the resulting RD sentence.

However, the semantic evaluation must assume exclusive reading. That is, what is not explicitly construed as within the truth condition of one clause must be interpreted as not part of its possible truth conditions. Two sentences cannot be assumed to be compatible by virtue of having unrelated but noncontradictory truth conditions. I will describe apparent exceptions in the next subsection, which in this subsection we will assume are not the case.

By the ungrammaticality of (16c-d), we see that clauses like (16a-b) cannot be conjoined. Similarly, (17a-b) cannot be conjoined either:

(16) a. ʷō xīhuān nǐ
    1s like 2s
    "I like you."

b. ʷō jiàn-guo tā
    1s see-EXP 3s
    "I've seen them."

c. ʷō xīhuān nǐ (ʷō) jiàn-guo tā
    1s like 2s 1s see-EXP 3s

d. ʷō jiàn-guo tā (ʷō) xīhuān nǐ
    1s see-EXP 3s 1s like 2s
(17) a. 无 zuótian shàngwu jiàn-dao tāmen le
1PL yesterday morning see-ACHV 3PL REA

“I saw them yesterday morning.”

b. 无 zuótian xiàwu (yòu) jiàn-dao tāmen le
1PL yesterday afternoon again see-ACHV 3PL REA

“I saw them yesterday afternoon.”

c. 无 zuótian shàngwu jiàn-dao tāmen le zuótian xiàwu (yòu)
1PL yesterday morning see-ACHV 3PL REA yesterday afternoon again

d. 无 zuótian xiàwu (yòu) jiàn-dao tāmen le zuótian shàngwu
1PL yesterday afternoon again see-ACHV 3PL REA yesterday morning

Two clauses can also be adjoined if one is more specific than the other. One case is when they have two coreferential NPs and are otherwise identical. For example, (18a-b), (19a-b), and (20a-b) result in sentences like (18c-d) (19c-d), and (20c-d).

(18) a. nǐ nánpényou lái-le ma
your boyfriend come-REA Q,Y/N

“Is your boyfriend here yet?”

b. tā lái-le ma
3S come-REA Q,Y/N

“Is s/he here yet?”

c. nǐ nánpényou lái-le ma tā (RD)
your boyfriend come-REA Q,Y/N 3S

“Your boyfriend, is he here yet?”

d. tā lái-le ma nǐ nánpényou (RD)
3S come-REA Q,Y/N your boyfriend

“Is he here yet, your boyfriend?”

(19) a. tā nánpényou lái-le ma
3S boyfriend come-REA Q,Y/N

“Is her boyfriend here yet?”

16
b. nèi ge juānmáor lái-le ma
that CL curly-haired come-REA Q.Y/N

“Is that curly-haired person here yet?”

c. tā nànpéngyou lái-le ma nèi ge juānmáor (RD)
3s boyfriend come-REA Q.Y/N that CL curly-haired

“Is her boyfriend here yet, that guy with curly hair?”

d. nèi ge juānmáor lái-le ma tānánpéngyou (RD)
that CL curly-haired come-REA Q.Y/N 3s boyfriend

“Is that guy with curly hair here yet, her boyfriend?”

(20) a. nǐ zài nǎr a
2s LOC where SFP

“Where are you?”

b. nǐ zài nǎr a
2s LOC where SFP

“Where are you?”

c. nǐ zài nǎr a nǐ zài (RD)
2s LOC where SFP 2s LOC

“Where are you?”

d. nǎr a nǐ zài (RD)
where SFP 2s LOC

“Where are you?”

Two clauses may also be conjoined if one’s truth condition is the other’s subset. For example, (21c-d) and (22c) are possible respectively from (21a-b) and (22a-b).

(21) a. wǒ zuótiān jiàn-dao tāmen le
1PL yesterday see-ACHV 3PL REA

“I saw them yesterday.”
Finally, two clauses where neither’s truth condition is the other’s subset can be con­
joined if their truth conditions explicitly and directly overlap. For example, (23c-d) are
possible. We can reconstruct them from (23a-b).

(23) a. wō zuótiān xiàyǔlǜdiān yìqián jiàn-dào-guo tāmén
    1PL yesterday before 6pm see-ACHV-EXP 3PL
    “I saw them yesterday before 6pm.”

b. wō zuótiān shǎngwùshìyìdiān yíhòu jiàn-dào-guo tāmén le
    1PL yesterday after 11am see-ACHV-EXP 3PL
    “I saw them yesterday after 11am.”
(23c) can only come from conjoining (23a-b) instead of (24a-b), because the Right Dislocation would involve movement out of a conjunction island, which is prohibited.  

(26) 

a. wǒ zuótiān xiàowùliùdiǎn yìqīán jiàn-dào-guò tāmén  
   1PL yesterday before 6pm see-ACHV-EXP 3PL  
   “I saw them yesterday before 6pm.”

b. wǒ zuótiān xiàowùliùdiǎn yìqīán (zuótiān) shàngwǔshíyìdiǎn yīhòu  
   1PL yesterday before 6pm (yesterday) after 11am  
   jiàn-dào-guò tāmén  
   see-ACHV-EXP 3PL  
   “I saw them yesterday after 11am.”

Note that topicalization is not a reliable identifier of whether movement is possible for the constituent, because in Mandarin the topic can be base generated, like *xiāngyá xiǎoshuò* “Spanish novels” in (24).

(24) xiāngyá xiǎoshuò wǒ dú-guò tángjīhē  
   Spain novel 1PL read-EXP Don Quixote  
   “As for Spanish novels, I’ve read Don Quixote.”

So, even though (25) is possible when the speaker is asked to answer whether they did see the person sometime before 5pm, this cannot be seen as a counterexample, since the topic may very well be base-generated.

(25) xiàowùliùdiǎn yìqīán wǒ sān diǎn yīhòu jiàn-dào-guò tāmén  
   before 5pm 1S after 3 o’clock see-ACHV-EXP 3PL  
   “Before 5pm, I saw them (sometime) after 3.”
4.2.1 ...Unless one shakes up the other

This section discusses two notable cases for the generalization. Two clauses that may appear to have nothing in common can still be conjoined if either of the following is true:

1. (a) the two clauses are contrastive;
   (b) one contains only information acknowledged and accessible by both parties.

2. (a) one clause provides backgrounding information for the other;
   (b) the backgrounding clause is relevant to the other informative clause.

In both of the situations, one might posit a silent syntactic or semantic node responsible for the contrasting or backgrounding, so that neither would be an exception to the generalization above. We discuss each of the situations separately below.

First, Right Dislocation is possible when the clauses explicitly contrast, in a manner not unlike (27).

(27) a. I didn’t see him; I heard him.
    b. I don’t know him; so it isn’t the case that “I’ve met with him”.

The acknowledged clause can be either true or false, as (28a-b) shows.

(28) a. wǒ bù rènshi tā wǒ zhīdào tā
       1s NEG be acquainted with 3s 1s know 3s
       “I’m not acquainted with them, even though yeah, I do know their existence.”

   b. wǒ qù-guo tā jiā wǒ bù rènshi tā
       1s go to-exp 3s home 1s NEG be acquainted with 3s
       “I’ve been to their home; how can I not know them.”

The acknowledged clause is affirmed in (28a), but denied in (28b). Notice that both the Precedent and the Dislocated are complete clauses without PRO. This is expected as the two clauses have no overlap; so no deletion would occur by informational identity. For example, (28a) would be constituted of the following two clauses:
These two clauses must be initially conjoined in the manner of (30a), and not like the manner of (30b), because RD cannot delete the novel material 但 “but”. In addition, (30b) constitutes a conjunction island, out of which which movement as well as RD is impossible (cf. discussion in §5.4.1).

(28) can only be uttered if the Dislocated is already explicitly known to both parties of the conversation. It would be ungrammatical otherwise; for example, the speaker cannot simply bring up the Dislocated in (28a) without it referring to a same piece of information previously mentioned in the conversation. In addition, the two clauses must be contrastive. A sentence such as (31) is usually ungrammatical unless the two parts somehow contrast. Needless to say, the grammatical reading of (31) is quite odd.

Second, Right Dislocation is possible when one clause provides relevant backgrounding information for the other. As examples, consider (32).
The Dislocated must provide background information to the Precedent, and the background must be relevant and support the primary information. The sentence would not be grammatical if the information were not so. For example, if someone hears (33), they would be very confused if the speaker’s status of being their big sister is not relevant to the listener going to the place.

(33) wǒ shì nǐ jiě nǐ qù nè’r
1s COP 2s elder sister 2s go to there

“I am your big sis! And you are going there...”

4.3 Empty proform in the Precedent

In this section, I argue that Mandarin RD follows the Principle of Use of Empty Proforms. It states that (Tanaka, 2001).

- Do not use empty proforms for new information, while using overt forms for old information.”

That Mandarin obeys this will show that an empty proform exists in the Precedent.

As mentioned in section II, Right Dislocation tends to operate on segments carrying less important information. Below we will see, however, that while the answer to a question indeed cannot just be Right Dislocated, it in fact allows RRD, i.e. it can be Right Dislocated if the corresponding position in the Precedent is not empty.

We found in §2.3 that the component that is the answer to a question cannot be Right Dislocated. This pattern is pursued in (34a-h). (34b-c) are two unmarked word orders, while (34d-h) are various attempts of Right Dislocation.

(34) a. nǐ shěnméshíhou hui lái ne (conventional order)
   2s when POT come Q.Y/N
   “When will you come?”

b. wǒ míngtian hui lái (conventional order)
   1s tomorrow POT come
   “I’ll come tomorrow.”
(34d-h) Right Dislocate different segments in (34b-c). (34d-f) show that while various situations allow for Right Dislocation, the adverb tomorrow does not. However, (34g-h) show that Right Dislocation of tomorrow is possible when there is another copy of tomorrow in the CPIP.

Therefore, it follows that the cause of the unacceptability for RD in (34f) is the superficial emptiness of the new information’s corresponding position. This suggests that the position is not syntactically vacated, but instead occupied by some phonologically silent constituent. Further, if we are to assume that Right Dislocation operates in a uniform fashion regardless of the intended information type of the Dislocated, then this silent constituent must be present in all cases of Right Dislocation. It hence follows that the constituent does not categorically prohibit Right Dislocation, but affects grammaticality depending on whether the information it corresponds to is new or old. In other words, its effect on acceptability depends on something beyond the syntactic structure (if we are to assume that, plainly, Mandarin does not have a distinct syntax to handle any new information). The most plausible explanation is the pragmatic Principle mentioned above.

Indeed, RD of tomorrow is acceptable in other contexts. For example, in a conversation about the scheduling of the next day, (35) is perfectly acceptable, even though it also Right Dislocates tomorrow and leaves the corresponding position empty.

(35) a. tāmen huì lái ba mǐngtiān
     3PL POT come UCTN tomorrow

     “They’ll come, right, for tomorrow?”
Therefore, we conclude that the corresponding position in the Precedent contains an empty proform.

4.4 Topicalization

Conspicuously, we posit that RD Topicalizes any secondary information. Below we show that this accounts for two syntactic restrictions on RD and an unexpected reading of focusing adverbs.

Call the first restriction the last verb constraint. As we shall see in §5.3, for all verbs in a sentence, only the last verb may not be Right Dislocated. In our hypothesis, Right Dislocating the last verb would involve topicalizing it. As will be discussed in detail in the section, this would either entail Topicalizing the equivalent of the “main verb,” or Topicalizing a constituent from a conjunction island; both of which are impossible.

Second, an IO in the Double Object construction cannot be RD’d (call this the IO constraint). It cannot be Topicalized either, such as in (36). Conversely, an IO in a prepositional phrase can be RD’d, and such a prepositional phrase can also be Topicalized, such as in (37).

\[\text{(36) a. wǒ xiǎng juān wǒmen xuèxiào yìdiǎnr qián (c.o.)} \]
\[1s \text{ want donate 1P school some money} \]
"I want to donate some money to my school."

\[\text{b. 'wǒmen xuèxiào wǒ xiǎng juān yìdiǎnr qián (Top.)} \]
\[1P \text{ school 1s want donate some money} \]

\[\text{c. 'wǒ xiǎng juān yìdiǎnr qián wǒmen xuèxiào (RD)} \]
\[1s \text{ want donate some money 1P school} \]

\[\text{(37) a. wǒ xiǎng gěi wǒmen xuèxiào juān yìdiǎnr qián (c.o.)} \]
\[1s \text{ want IO 1P school donate some money} \]
"I want to donate some money to my school."

\[\text{b. gěi wǒmen xuèxiào wǒ xiǎng juān yìdiǎnr qián (Top.)} \]
\[IO 1P \text{ school 1s want donate some money} \]

\[\text{c. wǒ xiǎng juān yìdiǎnr qián gěi wǒmen xuèxiào (RD)} \]
\[1s \text{ want donate some money IO 1P school} \]

The third issue is the scoping of focusing adverbs in Mandarin in an RD construction.
Mandarin has two monomorphemic adverbs meaning “only” or “just”, zhī and jìù. Neither of them can be Right Dislocated alone, but both can in a form combined with the copula shì, zhīshì and jìùshì. For example:

(38) a. wǒ zhī-shì tǎoyān tāmen a
    I only-COP dislike them EXCL

     b. wǒ tǎoyān tāmen a zhī-shì
    I dislike them EXCL only-COP

While (38a) has the both of the following interpretations, (38b) has only the latter:

(39) a. ’I dislike only them.
     b. It is just (the case) that I dislike them.

Namely, after Right Dislocation, these adverbs can no longer target the Object in the VP. They behave identically in the Topic position:

(40) zhī-shì wǒ tǎoyān tāmen a
     only-COP I dislike them SFP

     *”I dislike only them.”
     “It is just (the case) that I dislike them.”

4.5 Deletion in the first clause

Proposals for RD in other languages have only allowed for ellipsis in non-initial clauses, such as Ott (2012); Ott (2015); Tanaka (2001). Their variously simple and elegant proposals involve only movement in secondary clauses, and deletion only happens in the first clause under referential identity of information. Call such approach the attachment mutation approach.

However, Mandarin RD must allow for deletion in the first clause, so as to account for data like (41).

(41) a. tā, mèng-jian tā, gān shēnme le
     3s dream-ACHV.PRCV 3s do what REA

     “What did s/he dream of hērself doing?”

     b. tā, gān shēnme le tā, mèng-jian
     3s do what REA 3s dream-ACHV.PRCV
The subordinate clause in (41a) is embedded in an irrealis introduced by mèng-jìan in the main clause, "to have a dream of." Since the embedded clause is per se a realis (interpreted by default with the absence of irrealis indicators), the standalone interpretation of the Precedent would be incompatible with the integral interpretation of the whole sentence. Hence, the attachment mutation approach would predict sentences like (41b) to be ungrammatical; nevertheless, it is grammatical.

Therefore, to be able to properly interpret the sentence, we must assume that the embedded clause in (41a) is also embedded in an irrealis in (41b). The obvious explanation is that it is embedded identically like (41a), under the Right Dislocated part of tā mèng-jìan “s/he ha_s a dream of”. Since no audible irrealis-inducing segment is present in the Precedent, we must conclude that the irrealis-bearing segment has been deleted. Since the irrealis scopes over the entire Precedent, linguistic material belonging to some higher clause must have been deleted in the first clause. The least theoretically problematic approach would be that akin to Merchant (2004)'s: constituent movement to left periphery with ellipsis of the remainder constituent. Namely, tā gàn shénme le “What did s/he do” is first moved to left periphery, and then the remaining part tā mèng-jìan “s/he ha_s a dream of” is deleted.

4.6 Mechanism of SFP elimination and preservation

Any high Sentence Final Particle in the first clause is preserved in Right Dislocation, whereas no high SFPs in following clauses surface. If we specify that Topic is higher than C_SFP, the position high SFPs are in, and that the left periphery involved in the ellipsis of the first clause is lower than C_SFP, then the licensed deletions described in §4.1 are just deletions of C_SFP and whichever phrase immediately below the said left periphery. If we assume that the latter deletes IP, then we can simply reformulate the licensed deletions in §4.1 as the following:

- Topicalization: Any secondary information is Topicalized.
  - Then, delete the highest C_SFP of the clause.

- Fragmentation: Any primary information is raised to above IP and below C_SFP.
  - Then, delete the IP of the clause.

If the left periphery is immediately above the IP for all practical purposes, we would be able to simplify the deletion rule to

- Delete the node immediately below.

However, we cannot assume this here, because the evidence is lacking, and this claim requires further investigation.
4.7 Not uniclausal movement

RD is unlikely to be movement starting from a single clause. Such movement hypotheses suffer from an impossible pair of dilemmas – to account for MCRD, it must not move Dislocated; thus it would fail to explain the restrictions mentioned in §4.4. Further, to move any constituent containing the Dislocated and then move any lower constituent out, it would create a non-uniform solution regarding whether the Dislocated is clause-final.

We avoid successive cyclic movements, which move adjacent constituents one by one to the new position of each. This is a very costly operation for the human parser. In addition, as we shall see below, it is hard for even SCM to account for the c-command pattern.

Likewise, we avoid downward movement, as the trace would not be governed by its corresponding constituent.

Finally, we avoid mixed movement, as it may be very costly for the human parser.

First, note that such successive constituent fronting is not possible. Here, \( E_1, E_2, \) and \( X \) are any contiguous segments consisting of constituents.

\[
... E_1 X E_2 ... \] \( \rightarrow \) \[ ... E_1 t_X E_2 ... \] \( \rightarrow \) \[ ... E_1 t_X E_2 ... \] \( \rightarrow \) \[ ... E_1 t_X E_2 ... \] \( \rightarrow \) \[ ... E_1 t_X E_2 ... \]

In addition to moving \( X \), the trace \( t_X \) is unbounded at the end.

While (42) does not move \( X \) and keeps all traces bounded, it creates a non-uniform mechanism for RD. When \( X \) is any sentence-medial segment, suppose we have the following.

\[
... E_1 X E_2 ... \] \( \rightarrow \) \[ ... E_1 X E_2 ... \] \( \rightarrow \) \[ ... E_1 X E_2 ... \] \( \rightarrow \) \[ ... E_1 X E_2 ... \] \( \rightarrow \) \[ ... E_1 X E_2 ... \] \( \rightarrow \) \[ ... E_1 X E_2 ... \] \( \rightarrow \) \[ ... E_1 X E_2 ... \] \( \rightarrow \) \[ ... E_1 X E_2 ... \]

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When $X$ is sentence-final, so that no $E_2$ exists, however, it would necessarily reduce to the following.

\[
\begin{align*}
  \text{CP} & \rightarrow (\rightarrow) \text{S} \\
  E_1 & \quad \text{CP} \quad X \quad E_1 \\
  X & \quad E_1 \quad t_X \\
  t_{E_1} & \quad t_X \\
  \text{CP} & \quad X
\end{align*}
\]

Finally, if we do not move $X$ at all, then the solution would not be able to explain the constraints mentioned in §4.4. Suppose we have the following.

\[
\begin{align*}
  \text{[...} E_1 X E_2 \ldots \text{SFP}] & \xrightarrow{\text{Left}} [\text{SFP} [... E_1 X E_2 \ldots t_{\text{SFP}}]] \\
  [E_2 \ldots] [SFP [... E_1 X t_{E_2} t_{\text{SFP}}]] & \xrightarrow{\text{Left}} [[[...} E_1 [[E_2 \ldots] [SFP] [t_{E_1} X t_{E_2} t_{\text{SFP}}]]]]
\end{align*}
\]

This hypothesis overgenerates. By keeping the segment $X$ in place, it fails to predict the properties exhibited by our hypothesized topicalization: the last verb constraint, the IO constraint, and the special RD availability of focus adverbs.
5 Distribution of MRD

In this section, I present the distribution of Mandarin Right Dislocation non-exhaustively. The data is arranged by the grammatical categories of the Dislocated. Along I note any patterns and apparent constraints, without automatically assuming my hypothesis.

5.1 Nominals

First, as shown in (42c-h), both the Subject and the Direct Object can be Right Dislocated, but the Indirect Object in a double Object construction cannot:

(42) a. wǒ gěi-le tā yīběnrshū ya (conventional order)
    1s give-PFv him a book SFP
    "I gave him a book!"

b. wǒ bā yīběnrshū gěi-le tā ya (conventional order, DO fronted)
    1s DO a book give-PFv him SFP

c. gěi-le tā yīběnrshū ya wǒ (Subject RD)
    give-PFv him a book EXCL 1s

d. bā yīběnrshū gěi-le tā ya wǒ (Subject RD, with DO fronted)
    DO a book give-PFv him SFP 1s

e. wǒ gěi-le tā ya yīběnrshū (DO RD)
    1s give-PFv him SFP a book

f. wǒ gěi-le tā ya bā yīběnrshū (Fronted DO RD)
    1s give-PFv him SFP DO a book

g. wǒ gěi-le yīběnrshū ya tā (IO RD)
    1s give-PFv a book EXCL him

h. wǒ bā yīběnrshū gěi-le ya tā (IO RD, with DO fronted)
    1s DO a book give-PFv EXCL him

As IO RD is unacceptable even with a fronted DO, when structurally there would not be any ambiguities should IO RD be possible, the most likely scenario is that the unacceptability of IO RD is due to some feature of the syntactic position of the IO itself.

As (43a-d) show, the issue indeed lies in the syntactic position of the IO, instead of the semantic function (the θ-role).
(43) a. wǒ xiǎng sōng gěi tā yīběnrshū ya (conventional order, prepositional IO)
    1s want gift to him a book SFP
     "I want to gift him a book!"

b. wǒ xiǎng sōng yīběnrshū ya gěi tā (Prepositional IO RD)
    1s want gift a book SFP to him

c. wǒ xiǎng sōng tā yīběnrshū ya (conventional order, double Object)
    1s want gift him a book SFP
     "I want to gift him a book!"

d. *wǒ xiǎng sōng yīběnrshū ya tā (Double Object IO RD)
    1s want gift a book SFP him

As seen, RD is grammatical with the Indirect Object (in terms of 0-role) appearing in a prepositional phrase, but not the IO in a double Object construction. This suggests that it is the syntactic position of the IO in a double Object construction itself that forbids RD.

"Genitive" nouns cannot be Right Dislocated, either. For example, (44):

(44) a. nèi-ge shī xiāomíng-de diànnǎo a
    that-CL COP Ming-POS computer SFP
     "That's Ming's computer."

b. *nèi-ge shī diànnǎo a xiāomíng-de
    that-CL COP computer SFP Ming-POS
     *"That's computer, Ming's."

The word order of (44b) can be achieved only when the rightmost segment receives extra stress, not less. For example, when adding a descriptor afterward.

(45) a. nèi-ge shī diànnǎo a xiāomíng-de
    that-CL COP computer SFP Ming-POS
     "That's a computer; it is Ming's."

As we shall see in §6, Mandarin's copula shī can be dropped. This, combined with the fact that Mandarin is a radical pro-drop language, as well as the intended meaning, leads us to analyze the structure as (46a): two adjoined sentences, with ellipsis. It is the same structure as (46b), which evidently has nothing to do with RD.

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5.2 Adverbials

Not all adverbs are eligible for MRE. While some adverbs such as dàgāi “probably” and dàodi “on-earth” could be Right Dislocated, some others cannot, such as xiàoxiànde “carefully”; Right Dislocating them would not make the resulting sentence (properly) interpretable.

An adverbial’s eligibility is correlated to its categories. Below, I enumerate the possibilities and give an example for each. To save space, the CPIP is indicated with a dash.

Those eligible include most PP/DP adverbials, e.g. “in/with/for xxx”, “yesterday”, such as (47); functional adverbials, including adverbs related to time, frequency, duration, iteration, such as (48); speaker-oriented adverbials, indicating the speaker’s opinion, such as (49).

Among functional adverbials, the only exceptions are two focusing adverbs zhǐ and jiǔ both meaning “only/just.” As discussed in the previous section, they cannot be Right Dislocated, unless combined with the copula shì.

(47) PP/DP adverbial: tāmen - chīfàn-ne zài wūr-lǐ
   3PL - dine-CONT LOC room-inside

   “They are dining in the room.”

(48) Functional adverbial: tāmen - lái-le yǒu
   3PL - come-REA again

   “They are here, again?”
(49) Speaker-oriented adverbial: tāmén - lái-le kěndìng
3PL - come-REA definitely

“They are here, definitely.”

Mainly, two classes of adverbs are ineligible for Right Dislocation. One is manner and degree adverbials, such as “quickly” and “intensely”; the other is subject-oriented adverbials, indicating some quality of the verb’s subject, such as “intelligently” and “appropriately”.

In literary Mandarin, manner and degree adverbs can be dislocated as a stylish device. However, this may be a word order calque from European languages. Such dislocation does not result in the typical weak stress of RD, but usually stronger stress. Additionally, the positioning coincides with that reported in many European languages.

(50) a. tāmén fēicháng ānjìngde tāng-zhe
3PL very quietly lie down-CONT

“They are lying there very quietly.”

b. *tāmén tāng-zhe fēicháng ānjìngde
3PL lie down-CONT very quietly

c. *tāmén ānjìngde tāng-zhe fēicháng
3PL quietly lie down-CONT very

(51) a. tāmén hěn cōngmíngde rào-guòqù-le
3PL DEG cleverly circumvent-pass-PFV

“They went around that cleverly.”

b. *tāmén rào-guòqù-le hěn cōngmíngde
3PL circumvent-pass-PFV DEG cleverly

5.3 Verbals and their paraphernalia

Verbals comprise the most complex situation. In this section, we discuss pre-verbal auxiliaries, pre-verbal particles, post-verbal particles, negation words, VPs with just one verb,

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5Word order acceptable in literary Mandarin with stronger stress for the dislocated segment, as noted. The word order of (50c) is still ungrammatical therein.
VPs with multiple verbs (with subordinate clauses), the serial VP construction, and finally VP complexes.

5.3.1 Paraphernalia

Pre-verbal auxiliaries can be Right Dislocated, such as in (52).

(52) a. nǐ yào qù nǎ’ěr a (c.o.)
   2s VOL go to where SFP

b. nǐ qù nǎ’ěr a yào (RD)
   2s go to where SFP VOL

   "Where are you going?"

Pre-verbal particles can also be Right Dislocated, as shown in (53).

(53) a. nǐ zài gàn shā ne a (c.o.)
   2s PROG do what DUR SFP

b. nǐ gàn shā ne a zài (RD)
   2s do what DUR SFP PROG

   "What are you doing?"

Post-verbal particles, however, cannot be RD’d. Below we enumerate common post-verbal particles.

(54) a. wǒ chī-le fān le ya (c.o.)
   1s eat-PFV what REA SFP

   "I’ve had meal."

b. wǒ chī fān le ya -le (RD)
   1s eat meal REA SFP -PFV

c. wǒ chī-le fān ya le (RD)
   1s eat-PFV meal SFP REA
(55) a. tā chuān-zhe máoyī ne ya (c.o.)
    3s wear-CONT sweater DUR SFP
    "He’s wearing a sweater."

b. *tā chuān máoyī ne ya -zhe (RD)
    3s wear sweater DUR SFP -CONT

c. *tā chuān-zhe máoyī ya ne (RD)
    3s wear-CONT sweater SFP CONT

(56) a. wǒ jiān-guo tā le ya (c.o.)
    1s see-EXP 3s REA SFP
    "I’ve seen/met him/her."

b. *wǒ jiān tā le ya -guo (RD)
    1s see 3s REA SFP -EXP

c. *wǒ jiān-guo tā ya le (RD)
    1s see-EXP 3s SFP REA

Negation words cannot be RD’d alone, as shown below.

(57) a. wǒ méi(yǒu) hē jiǔ a (c.o.)
    1s NEG.IMPFV drink alcohol SFP
    "I didn’t drink."

b. *wǒ hē jiǔ a méi(yǒu) (RD)
    1s drink alcohol SFP NEG.IMPFV

(58) a. wǒ bù hē jiǔ a (c.o.)
    1s NEG drink alcohol SFP
    "I don’t drink."

b. *wǒ hē jiǔ a bù (RD)
    1s drink alcohol SFP NEG
5.3.2 General VP simplexes

We propose a unified generalization for simple VPs, VPs with subordinate clauses, (collectively henceforth general VP simplexes), the serial VP construction, the pivotal construction, and the resultative construction: that the last verb in the VP sequence may not be RD'd. For example, (59)-(60):

\[(59) \quad \text{a. } \text{zāngsān rènshì } \text{lìsì a (c.o.)} \]
\[\quad \text{know (interpersonal)} \quad \text{SFP} \]
\[\quad "\text{Zhangsan knows Lisi."} \]
\[\text{b. } \text{zāngsān lìsì a } \text{rènshì (RD)} \]
\[\quad \text{SFP know} \]

(60) is adapted from Lu (1980).

\[(60) \quad \text{a. bābā dàsuān xiān huì chōngqìng (c.o.)} \]
\[\quad \text{father plan first(adv.) return Chongqing} \]
\[\quad "I (father) am planning to go back to Chongqing first." \]
\[\text{b. xiān huì chōngqìng bābā dàsuān (RD)} \]
\[\quad \text{first return Chongqing father plan} \]
\[\text{c. bābā xiān huì chōngqìng dàsuān (RD)} \]
\[\quad \text{father first return Chongqing plan} \]
\[\text{d. } \text{bābā dàsuān xiān chōngqìng huì (RD)} \]
\[\quad \text{father plan first Chongqing return} \]
\[\text{e. } \text{bābā dàsuān xiān huì chōngqìng (RD)} \]
\[\quad \text{father plan first return Chongqing} \]

As seen in (60b-c), it is grammatical to Right Dislocate the first verb "prepare"; however, (60d-e) show that it is impossible to Right Dislocate the final verb "return," or with its Direct Object also.

There are two apparent exceptions to this generalization, one of which is the subject of §5.7. The other one is (61).

\[(61) \quad \text{a. bābā dàsuān a xiān huì chōngqìng (RD)} \]
\[\quad \text{father plan SFP first return Chongqing} \]
\[\quad "I (father) do plan to go back to Chongqing first." \]
(61) does not actually violate our generalization; for, what is Right Dislocated is the entire Sentential node \texttt{[PRO xiān huì chōngqīng]}, "(to) go back to Chongqing first" as the Direct Object of the verb "plan", instead of a single verb or VP. This scheme is thus not relevant.

5.3.3 Multiple VPs

In this subsection, we discuss the serial verb construction, the pivotal construction, and the resultative construction.

	extbf{Serial verb construction} Mandarin has a serial verb construction in which multiple VPs share the same syntactic subject, such as the sequence \texttt{Subj VP$_1$ VP$_2$}, but none is an argument of any other. Right Dislocation is only possible when VP$_1$ acts circumstantially to specify for VP$_2$ for some semantic relationship; VP$_1$ can be RD'd. The following examples are adapted from Lu (1980).

(62) a. tā dāi-le hāizi qù gōngyuán le (c.o.)
   3s bring-PFV child go to park REA
   "S/he went to the park bringing the child."

b. tā qù gōngyuán le dāi-le hāizi (RD VP$_1$)
   3s go to park REA bring-PFV child

c. *tā dāi-le hāizi le qù gōngyuán (RD VP$_2$) \footnote{(62c) can be the RD counterpart of (63):}
   3s bring-PFV child go to park
   "S/he went to the park bringing the child."

d. *tā dāi-le hāizi qù gōngyuán le (RD VP$_2$)
   3s bring-PFV child go to park REA

(63) a. tā qù gōngyuán dāi-le hāizi le (c.o.)
   3s go to park bring-PFV child REA
   "S/he brought the child as s/he was going to the park."
(64) a. tā ná-le shūbāor zhùnbei qù tūshūguǎn (c.o.)
   3s take-PFV schoolbag prepare go to library
   “S/he took the schoolbag in preparation of going to the library.”

b. tā zhùnbei qù tūshūguǎn ná-le shūbāor (RD VP₁)
   3s prepare go to library take-PFV schoolbag

c. tā ná-le shūbāor zhùnbei qù tūshūguǎn (RD VP₂) ¹⁰
   3s take-PFV schoolbag prepare go to library
   “S/he took the schoolbag in preparation of going to the library.”

(66) a. wòmen xià-le kě dā lǎnqiūr (c.o.)
   1PL end-PFV class hit basketball
   “We’ll play basketball after class ends.”

b. wòmen dā lǎnqiūr xià-le kě (RD VP₁)
   1PL hit basketball end-PFV class

c. wòmen xià-le kě dā lǎnqiūr (RD VP₂)
   1PL end-PFV class hit basketball

(67) a. nèi yējūhuār wén-zhe tīng xiāng de (c.o.)
   that wild chrysanthemum smell-CaNT rather aromatic MOD
   “That wild chrysanthemum gives a rather aromatic smell.”

b. nèi yējūhuār tīng xiāng de wén-zhe (RD VP₂)
   that wild chrysanthemum rather aromatic MOD smell-CaNT

c. nèi yējūhuār wén-zhe tīng xiāng de (RD VP₂)
   that wild chrysanthemum smell-CaNT rather aromatic MOD

¹⁰(64c) can be the RD counterpart of (65), a sentence expressing temporal sequence or the manner of the latter VP:

(65) a. tā zhùnbei qù tūshūguǎn ná-le shūbāor (c.o.)
   3s prepare go to library take-PFV schoolbag
   “S/he was ready to go to the library and took the schoolbag.”

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Pivotal construction When the subject of the subordinate clause is also the object of the main clause, the construction is called the pivotal construction. Lu (1980) notes that RD is possible for it only when the pivotal expresses a command. Right Dislocation occurs as follows:

\[(NP_M) \ VP_M \ NP \ VP_S \Rightarrow VP_S (NP_M) \ VP_M \ NP\]

For example:

(68) a. (nǐ) qǐng tāmen dōu huí-qu ba (c.o.)
2s request 3PL MULT return-back EXHORT

"Why don’t you ask them all to go back."

b. dōu huí-qu ba (nǐ) qǐng tāmen (RD)
MULT return-back EXHORT 2s request 3PL

c. *tāmen dōu huí-qu ba (nǐ) qǐng (RD)
3PL MULT return-back EXHORT 2s request

(69) a. guāi wǒ méi kàn lù (c.o.)
blame 1s NEG.IMPFV watch road

"[someone] blame(s) me for not watching where to go."

"I am to blame for not watching where to go."

b. *méi kàn lù guāi wǒ (RD)
NEG.IMPFV watch road blame 1s

c. *wǒ méi kàn lù guāi (RD)
1s NEG.IMPFV watch road blame

(68) expresses an indirect command, and allows for the aforementioned RD. On the other hand, (69) is not, and RD is impossible for it. In either case, the intermediate NP and \((NP_M) \ VP_M\) must be Right Dislocated together.

Resultative One way Mandarin expresses the resultative ("...so...that IP", "such that") is to use the resultative particle de (or dě). It is attached to IP₁; IP₂ denotes what results from IP₁. Any segment ending in [IP₁ de] can be RD’d, including [IP₁ de], as shown in (70). When IP₁ and IP₂ have different Subjects, the only possibility is to RD [IP₁ de] entirely, as (71) shows.
It is possible for the different kinds of VP structures to combine to form a sentence. Let us call such combinations VP complexes.

The pivotal and the serial verb construction may be combined; the resulting sentence may still allow for RD.

When a pivotal construction is subordinated to a serial verb construction, there is only one form of RD possible:

\[(NP) \text{VP}_1 \text{VP}_2 \text{NP}_M \text{VP}_M \Rightarrow \text{VP}_2 \text{NP}_M \text{VP}_M (NP) \text{VP}_1\]

"When you start working in the afternoon, tell Zhangsan to come here."

b. tōngzhī zhāngsān lái zhèr ni xiàwū shàng-le bānr (RD) notify come here 2s afternoon start-PFV work


\[(70)\] a. tā gāoxìng de dōu yào kū-le (c.o.) 3s (be) happy RES INT INCL cry-PFV
   "S/he is so happy that s/he is almost in tears."

b. tā dōu yào kū-le gāoxìng de (RD VP₁ de) 3s INT INCL cry-PFV (be) happy RES

c. dōu yào kū-le tā gāoxìng de (RD IP₁ de) INT INCL cry-PFV 3s (be) happy RES

d. 'tā gāoxìng de dōu yào kū-le (RD VP₂) 3s (be) happy RES INT FUT cry-PFV

\[(71)\] a. tā jiēshì de fēicháng qīngchu (c.o.) 3s explain RES very clear
   "S/he explains it such that it is very clear."

b. fēicháng qīngchu a tā jiēshì de (RD IP₁ de) very clear SFP 3s explain RES

c. 'tā fēicháng qīngchu a jiēshì de (RD VP₁ de) 3s very clear SFP explain RES

5.3.4 VP complexes

The pivotal and the serial verb construction may be combined; the resulting sentence may still allow for RD.

When a pivotal construction is subordinated to a serial verb construction, there is only one form of RD possible:

\[(NP) \text{VP}_1 \text{VP}_2 \text{NP}_M \text{VP}_M \Rightarrow \text{VP}_2 \text{NP}_M \text{VP}_M (NP) \text{VP}_1\]

"When you start working in the afternoon, tell Zhangsan to come here."

b. tōngzhī zhāngsān lái zhèr ni xiàwū shàng-le bānr (RD) notify come here 2s afternoon start-PFV work
When a serial verb construction is subordinated to a pivotal construction, three schemes are possible:

1. \((\text{NP}_M) \text{VP}_M \text{NP} \text{VP}_1 \text{VP}_2 \Rightarrow \text{VP}_1 \text{VP}_2 (\text{NP}_M) \text{VP}_M \text{NP}\)

For example:

(73) a. (mā) jiào nǐ fāng-le xué mǎshāng huí jiā (c.o.)
mother call 2s release-PFV school immediately return home

"Mom wants you to go back home right after school."

b. fāng-le xué mǎshāng huí jiā (mā) jiào nǐ (RD)
release-PFV school immediately return home mother call 2s

2. \((\text{NP}_M) \text{VP}_M \text{NP} \text{VP}_1 \text{VP}_2 \Rightarrow (\text{NP}_M) \text{VP}_M \text{NP} \text{VP}_2 \text{VP}_1\)

For example:

(74) a. (mā) jiào nǐ xià-le bān qù gūgū jiā (c.o.)
mother call 2s end-PFV work go to aunt home

"Mom wants you to go to aunt’s place after work."

b. (mā) jiào nǐ qù gūgū jiā xià-le bān (RD)
mother call 2s go to aunt home end-PFV work

3. \((\text{NP}_M) \text{VP}_M \text{NP} \text{VP}_1 \text{VP}_2 \Rightarrow \text{VP}_2 (\text{NP}_M) \text{VP}_M \text{NP} \text{VP}_1\)

Lu (1980) notes that this is only allowed in a response to a question. For example:

(75) a. (mā) jiào wǒ xià-le bān qù nǎ’r
mother call 1s end-PFV work go to where

"Where does mom want me to go after work?"

b. (mā) jiào nǐ xià-le bān qù gūgū jiā (c.o.)
mother call 2s end-PFV work go aunt home

"Mom wants you to go to aunt’s place after work."

c. qù gūgū jiā (mā) jiào nǐ xià-le bān (RD)
go aunt home mother call you end-PFV work
5.4 Islands

5.4.1 Conjunction island

It is impossible to RD an element inside a conjunction island. For example, neither of the conjoined nouns in (76) can be RD’d.

(76) a. zhāngsān kāndao-le lǐsī hé wāngwū (c.o.)
    see-PFV and

    “Zhangsan saw Lisi and Wangwu.”

b. *zhāngsān kāndao-le lǐsī hé wāngwū (RD)
    see-PFV and

c. *zhāngsān kāndao-le lǐsī hé wāngwū (RD)
    see-PFV and

d. *zhāngsān kāndao-le hé wāngwū lǐsī (RD)
    see-PFV and

e. *zhāngsān kāndao-le wāngwū lǐsī hé (RD)
    see-PFV and

Similarly, a conjoined VP cannot be RD’d, either, even though the word order might appear the same as in the case of the serial verb construction.

(77) a. wǒmén qù-le shídiāiguāngchāng dēng-le dīguódàshā (c.o.)
    1PL go to-PFV Times Square mount-PFV Empire State Building

    “We went to Times Square and went up the Empire State Building.”

b. wǒmén dēng-le dīguódàshā qù-le shídiāiguāngchāng (c.o.)
    1PL mount-PFV Empire State Building go to-PFV Times Square

    “We went up the Empire State Building and went to Times Square.”

c. *wǒmén dēng-le dīguódàshā qù-le shídiāiguāngchāng (RD)
    1PL mount-PFV Empire State Building go to-PFV Times Square

d. *wǒmén qù-le shídiāiguāngchāng dēng-le dīguódàshā (RD)
    1PL go to-PFV Times Square mount-PFV Empire State Building

(77) is an example of conjoined VPs, listing events. While we can normally change the order of the two conjoined VPs, RD cannot happen for either VP.
5.4.2 Complex NP island

RD is impossible for an element inside a complex NP island, as shown in (78) and (79).

(78) a. zhāngsān tōu-le lǐsī gěi wángwǔ de shū (c.o.)
    steal-PFV give CP book

    "Zhangsan stole the book that Lisi gave Wangwu."

b. 'zhāngsān tōu-le gěi wángwǔ de shū lǐsī (RD)
    steal-PFV give CP book

(79) a. zhāngsān xīn lǐsī dā-le wángwǔ de shuòfār (c.o.)
    believe beat-PFV CP saying

    "Zhangsan believes the story that Lisi beat Wangwu."

b. 'zhāngsān xīn lǐsī dā-le de shuòfār wángwǔ (RD)
    believe beat-PFV CP saying

(78) is a relative clause complex NP, and (79) is a nominal complement complex NP.

5.4.3 Adjunct island

RD is likewise impossible for an element inside an adjunct island, as (80) shows. Right dislocating an element such as wángwǔ results in ungrammaticality.

(80) a. zhāngsān zài lǐsī yù-dào wángwǔ zhīqián jiu dú bó le (c.o.)
    LOC encounter-ACHV before PRIOR read Ph.D.
    REA

    "Zhangsan was doing a Ph.D. before Lisi encountered Wangwu."

b. 'zhāngsān zài lǐsī yù-dào zhīqián jiu dú bó le wángwǔ (RD)
    LOC encounter-ACHV before PRIOR read Ph.D. REA

    wángwǔ (RD)
5.5 Topic

Lu (1980) notes that a constituent in the Topic position can be Right Dislocated. For example, (81a) is grammatical, although its naïve counterpart (81b) is not. Lu (1980) proposes that it originates from the Topic construction, as in (81c).

(81) a. mǎi-le cài (RD)
    buy-PFV vegetable
    “Bought vegetables.”

b. *mǎi-le cài
    buy-PFV vegetable

c. cài mǎi-le (Top.)
    vegetable buy-PFV

(81b) is ungrammatical because an indefinite Object requires the reality aspect marker le for the sentence to hold; a grammatical sentence would have to be either of (82). Yet, in (81c), since no audible segment intervenes between the reality marker le and the perfective marker le, only one is spelled out (see footnote 1). So, (81c) stands grammatical with only one le.

(82) a. mǎi cài le
    buy vegetable REA

b. mǎi-le cài le
    buy-PFV vegetable REA

5.6 Interrogative words

Interrogative words cannot be right dislocated. For example, (83).

(83) a. nǐ xīhuàn shénme ne (c.o.)
    2s like what Q
    “What do you like?”

b. *nǐ xīhuàn ne shénme (RD)
    2s like Q what
This restriction is not lexical but syntactic. Wh-words that function as indefinites allows for right-dislocation. For example, compare (84) and (85).

(84) a. shēi zōu-le ma (c.o.)
   INDEF.PERS leave-PFV Q.Y/N
   "Did someone leave?"

b. zōu-le ma shēi (RD)
   leave-PFV Q.Y/N INDEF.PERS

(85) a. shēi zōu-le ne (c.o.)
   who leave-PFV Q
   "Who left?"

b. zōu-le ne shēi (RD)
   leave-PFV Q who

In (84), shēi is an indefinite, so right dislocation is permissible. However, the interrogative article ne in (85) makes it an interrogative word. Thus, it can no longer be right dislocated.

5.7 Pretty much everything else

It is possible to right dislocate everything before a certain node, including any verbs, even in a general VP simplex. Lu (1980) notes that the RD of everything before Direct Object occurs frequently in responses. We reproduce an example below as (86).

(86) a. nǐ xiǎng hē diānr shéme
   2s want drink bit what
   "What would you like to drink?"

b. hē diānr píjiǔ ba (c.o.)
   drink bit beer CONJECT
   "I’d have some beer."

c. píjiǔ ba hē diānr (RD)
   beer CONJECT drink bit
6 Exceptionally: is copula silent?

6.1 To be and to have, these are the questions

It seems plausible to assume that copulas and usual verbs are not two distinct categories. However, we show in this section that, with this assumption and the known behaviors of RD, we will be forced to conclude that the copula in Mandarin may be silent, and what is considered to be the overt pronunciation of the copula may just be a particle usually attached to the silent copula to form a well-formed sentence.

We discuss the following two copula words: 使 and 有. The most common copula is 使, which expresses judgment and predication. 有 occurs in a very limited set of environments.

Both verbs can be Right Dislocated, as shown in (87) and (88). For example:

(87) a. nǐ shì niúyuērén a  
25 COP New Yorker EXCL

b. nǐ niúyuērén a shì  
25 New Yorker EXCL COP

“You are a New Yorker!”

(88) a. nǐ yǒu èrshísùi a  
25 COP age 20 EXCL

b. nǐ èrshísùi a yǒu  
25 age 20 EXCL COP

“You are (already) twenty years old?”

It should be noted, however, that 有 cannot be dislocated as a substantive verb meaning “to have/possess”, such as in (89).

(89) a. nǐ yǒu shìbēnshū a  
25 possess ten books EXCL

b. nǐ shìbēnshū a yōu  
25 ten books EXCL possess

“You have (as many as) 10 books?”
Assuming the copula is not categorically distinct from usual verbs, the fact that the last verb may not be Right Dislocated alone implies that neither shì nor yòu is verbal. Since there must be a copula in the sentence, the copula must be silent. Because shì and yòu behave otherwise very close to a copula, they are likely actually attached to the copula position; they are thus likely particles themselves carrying some semantic force.

Indeed, this explains why shì may be omitted from statements:

(90) a. wǒ niùyuèrén a
     1s New Yorker EXCL

b. niùyuèrén a wǒ
    New Yorker EXCL 1s

“I am a New Yorker.”

Further, it explains why one can omit yòu in (88), as in (91), but not in (89), as (92) shows:

(91) a. nǐ ěrhìshì a
     you age 20 SFP

     “You are (already) twenty years old?”

b. *nǐ shǐbènrshù a
   you ten books SFP

   *“You have (as many as) 10 books?”

If this holds, then we should find evidence that a verb is in the first clause of (87b).

7 Conclusion

I have demonstrated that Mandarin Right Dislocation arises from two underlying adjoined clauses that are selected by truth value condition criteria, subject to raising and ellipsis. This analysis correctly predicts properties of Mandarin RD within current theoretical frameworks.
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