On (Pseudo-)Right Dislocation in Japanese

Synopsis: Despite its strict head-final SOV character, Japanese has a construction so-called Right Dislocation (RD), where a constituent appears in a post-verbal position (given in boldface), as in (1). There is a version of RD where the post-verbal phrase lacks its Case-maker/postposition. This version, which we call Pseudo-right Dislocation (PRD), has been rarely studied in the literature. If any, previous studies have taken it for granted that PRD is merely a subtype of RD (see, e.g., Endo 1996, Fukutomi 2007).

The purpose of this paper is two-fold. First, we show that there are certain differences between PRD and “standard” RD with a Case/postposition marked post-verbal phrase (SRD). Then, we argue that distinguishing PRD from SRD sheds a new light on a controversy on the analysis of RD.

There have been proposed at least two types of approaches to RD schematically summarized in (2). The first type of approach (Kuno 1978, Abe 1999 and Tanaka 2001, a.o.) proposes that a RD sentence consists of two independent clauses, where the second clause is repeated from the first one, as shown in (2a). The first clause contains a null pronoun, and the “right dislocated” XP undergoes leftward movement within the second clause. Finally, deletion in the second clause yields the surface string. On the other hand, as shown in (2b), the second type of approach (cf. Endo 1996) argues that RD is derived via leftward movement of the dislocated XP followed by remnant movement of the rest of the clause (= γ in (2b)). We discuss that while SRD is best analyzed along the line of the first approach, the properties of PRD can be nicely accounted by the second approach with a modification. To be more specific, we propose that PRD is derived from the bare-topic construction (see Taguchi 2009) in (3), where a topic phrase without a topic marker (given in italics) is base-generated in the left-periphery, via movement of β, as schematically shown in (4).

Observations: It is known that in SRD an embedded phrase can appear on the right edge of the matrix clause while it cannot appear on that of the embedded clause (see Haraguchi 1973, Kuno 1978 and Abe 1999), and the same holds true for PRD, as shown in (5a-b). That is, both SRD and PRD are matrix phenomena, though they can participate in a long-distance dependency. The examples in (6), however, indicate that SRD exhibits island-effects (see Simon 1989 and Tanaka 2001, a.o.), while PRD does not.

Second, these two constructions behave differently with respect to reconstruction; the dislocated phrases in SRD exhibit reconstruction effects, while those in PRD do not. For instance, SRD allows an anaphor to be contained in the dislocated phrase, while PRD does not, as shown in (7).

The final difference between SRD and PRD has to do with the possibility of doubling of the dislocated phrase. Tanaka (2001) observes that SRD allows the gap to be filled by a phrase identical to the dislocated phrase (indicated by underline) as in (8a). On the contrary, PRD does not allow the gap to be filled, irrespective of the presence of the Case-marker/post-position on the pre-verbal phrase, as shown in (8b).

Analysis: Although the two approaches in (2) can equally capture the island-sensitivity of SRD and the possibility of reconstruction (as both employ leftward movement of the dislocated phrase), the doubling fact in (8a) argues for the approach in (2a): Since the pre-verbal gap is pro under the approach in (2a), it is naturally expected that the gap can be replaced by a full-fledged DP/PP. The other approach in (2b), on the contrary, must stipulate only in this case a trace of leftward movement can be fully realized, nonetheless leftward movement in Japanese resists resumption as in (9). Thus, of the two approaches to RD, the first approach in (2a) is superior in capturing the properties of SRD. Notice, however, that the first approach fails to explain the properties of PRD because PRD is island-insensitive, and as in (10), leftward movement in Japanese does not allow a Case-marker/post-position to be stranded. Then, we propose that the properties of PRD can be explained by adapting the insight of the approach in (2b), namely, the sentence-final position of the dislocated phrase results from leftward movement of the other materials. As mentioned above, we propose that a PRD sentence is derived from the bare-topic constructions as schematically shown in (4). This analysis captures the properties of PRD in the following manner:

(i) Embedded PRD impossible: As in (11), a bare-topic is not allowed in the embedded clause (see Taguchi 2009 for an account), so it follows that PRD is a matrix phenomenon (see (5)).
(ii) Island-insensitivity: Since the bare-topic is related to the gap via the Aboutness relation (cf. Kuno 1973), not via movement, the island-insensitivity of PRD is naturally expected (see (6)).
(iii) Reconstruction: Since an anaphor contained in a bare-topic cannot be licensed as in (12) (presumably because it is base-generated in the left-periphery), the lack of reconstruction is readily captured (for (7), movement of the rest of the clause does not save the anaphor).
(iv) Unavailability of doubling: As in (13), the bare-topic construction somehow disallows the gap to be realized as a full-fledged DP/PP. Hence, the unavailability of doubling in PRD as opposed to SRD (cf. (8)) follows.

1. a. Taroo-ga, yonda-yo, ano hon(-o), b. Taroo-ga e, okane-o nusunda-yo, ano saihu(-kara), T.-nom read-prt that book-acc T.-nom money-acc stole-prt that wallet-from ‘Taroo read e, that book,’ ‘Taroo stole money e, (from) that wallet,’

2. a. [a … pro; … V] [β XP, [a … t; … V]] \[ \rightarrow \] [a … pro; … V] [β XP, t]

\[ \text{Leftward movement} \]
\[ \text{Deletion of } \alpha \]

2. b. [a \[ β XP, [t; … V] \]] \[ \rightarrow \] [a \[ \beta t, … \]] \[ \text{Movement of } \gamma \]


4. [a bare-topic, [β … e, … V]] \[ \rightarrow \] [[a \[ e, … V \]] \[ a \[ \text{bare-topic, } t_b]]\]

\[ \text{Movement of } \beta \]

5. a. [Hanako-ga [Taro-ga e, yonda to] itteta-yo], ano hon[(-o/-Ø)], H.-nom T.-nom read C said-prt that book-acc ‘[Hanako said [that Taroo read e]], that book,’

b. [Hanako-ga [Taro-ga e, yonda to ano hon[(-o/-Ø)], itteta-yo], H.-nom T.-nom read C that book-acc said-prt

6. a. [Hanako-ga [[e, okane-o nusunda] otoko]-o tukamaeta-yo], ano saihu[*-kara/ok-Ø], H.-nom money-acc stole man-acc arrested-prt that wallet-from ‘[Hanako arrested [the man [who stole money e]], (from) that wallet,’ (Complex NP island)

b. [[Taroo-ga e, suteta kara] Hanako-ga totemoko okotteru-yo], ano hon[*-kara/ok-Ø], T.-nom discarded because H.-nom very is.angry-prt that book-acc ‘[[Because Taroo discarded e, Hanako is very angry], that book,’ (Adjunct island)

7. [Hanako-an Hanako-ga e, okane-o nusunda-yo, [otagai-no saihu*(-kara)], T.-and H.-nom money-acc stole-prt each.other-gen wallet-from ‘Taroo and Hanako stole money (from) e, each other’s wallet,’


b. [Taro-ga ano saihu(-kara/-Ø), okane-o nusunda-yo, ano saihu-Ø, T.-nom that wallet-from money-acc stole-prt that wallet ‘Taroo stole money (from) that wallet, that wallet,’


10. *Ano saihu, [Taro-ga t-kara okane-o] nusunda that wallet T.-nom -from money-acc stole ‘That wallet, Taroo stole money from t,’


12. *[Otagai-no saihu-Ø], Taroo-to Hanako-ga e, okane-o nusunda-yo each.other-gen wallet T.-and H.-nom money-acc stole-prt ‘Each other’s wallet, Taroo and Hanako stole money (from) e,’

13. *Ano saihu-Ø, Taroo-ga ano saihu(-kara/-Ø), okane-o nusunda-yo that wallet T.-nom that wallet-from money-acc stole-prt ‘That wallet, Taroo stole money from that wallet,’