

Pseudogapping parameters

Yuyang Liu & Tommy Tsz-Ming Lee*

Abstract. This paper makes two main contributions. First, it offers novel evidence supporting an extension of the traditional view that Chinese languages lack English-style gapping to include pseudogapping. Second, it investigates the parametric underpinnings of pseudogapping, aiming to account for why Cantonese and Mandarin disallow a movement plus deletion derivation of pseudogapping despite allowing focus movement and VP ellipsis, operations that are thought to be involved in Japanese pseudogapping. We attribute this contrast to a FocP licensing parameter that prohibits ellipsis of VP complements following focus movement in Chinese, a parameter further motivated by right dislocation asymmetries. We conclude that the crosslinguistic distribution of pseudogapping emerges from the interplay among multiple phenomena, including overt QR, VP ellipsis, focus movement, and FocP licensing.

Keywords. pseudogapping; focus movement; FocP licensing; quantifier raising; VP ellipsis; Cantonese; Mandarin Chinese; Japanese

1. Introduction. The ultimate goal of this paper is stated in the title — namely, to pin down the parametric settings that predict the (un)availability of pseudogapping (PG) in a language. Two urgent questions demand answers: what is PG and why we should care. To answer the first, consider (1), where the two instances of ellipsis can be roughly characterized as having a verb gap but differ in whether the inflectional domain remains intact. PG refers to the case where it does. For early references of gapping and PG, see Ross 1970 and Sag 1976 (where PG is treated as a subclass of Verb Phrase Deletion).

(1) *English*

a. *Gapping*

John **ate** three apples, and Mary [**ate**] four oranges.

b. *PG*

John should **eat** three apples, and Mary should [**eat**] four oranges.

In addressing the second question, note that gaps and pseudogaps on the surface have the curious property of not respecting constituency. Against the background that accounts involving processes that abandon constituency (e.g., Weir 2014) overgenerate, this paper marks another attempt at understanding seemingly nonconstituent null materials through a crosslinguistic lens without breaking the connection between constituency and ellipsis.

A typology should feature more than one language. Another language where gapping has sparked considerable discussion is Mandarin, in which it is traditionally assumed that English-style gapping is not allowed (Tang 2001). Constructions resembling gapping and PG (2), how-

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ever, have been reported (Tai 1969; Li 1985, 1988; Paul 1999; Wei 2008, 2011; Ai 2014, 2023) in the language, and we add the Cantonese equivalent in (3).¹

(2) *Mandarin*

- a. *Gapping-like construction* (cf. Li 1985:97)
 Zhangsan **chi-le** san ge pingguo. Lisi Δ si ge (pingguo).
 Zhangsan eat-PFV three CLF apple Lisi four CLF apple
 ‘Zhangsan **ate** three apples. Lisi [**ate**] four (apples).’
- b. *PG-like construction* (cf. Wei 2008:82)
 Zhangsan yinggai **chi** san ge pingguo. Lisi yinggai Δ si ge (pingguo).
 Zhangsan should eat three CLF apple Lisi should four CLF apple
 ‘Zhangsan should **eat** three apples. Lisi should [**eat**] four (apples).’

(3) *Cantonese*

- a. *Gapping-like construction*
 Zoengsaam **sik-zo** saam go pinggwō. Leisei Δ sei go (pinggwō).
 Zoengsaam eat-PFV three CLF apple Leisei four CLF apple
 ‘Zoengsaam **ate** three apples. Leisei [**ate**] four (apples).’
- b. *PG-like construction*
 Zoengsaam jinggoi **sik** saam go pinggwō. Leisei jinggoi Δ sei go (pinggwō).
 Zoengsaam should eat three CLF apple Leisei should four CLF apple
 ‘Zoengsaam should **eat** three apples. Leisei should [**eat**] four (apples).’

An immediate question is whether we should understand (2–3) along the same lines as (1). This paper holds the position that Chinese gapping-like and PG-like constructions are not true gapping and PG, and we advance the views in (4).


(4) *First part of the proposal*

- a. Chinese gapping-like construction \neq English gapping.
- b. Chinese PG-like construction \neq English PG.
- c. Chinese gapping like construction = Chinese PG-like construction = empty verb.

In English, PG is typically understood to involve moving the remnant (Move-R) followed by VP ellipsis (VPE) (Sag 1976; Levin 1978; Jayaseelan 1990; Lasnik 1999; but cf. Agbayani & Zoerner 2004 for an ATB movement analysis), as in (5).

(5) *Derivation of English PG*

John should **eat** three apples, and Mary should [four oranges]_I [**eat** t_I].



If the views in (4) are true, then as a language that allows Move-R and VPE, Chinese raises a question of why it does not allow the two mechanisms combined (6).

¹ Glossing abbreviations follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules with this addition: SFP = sentence-final particle.

- (6) How is it the case that the following three claims hold simultaneously?
- English allows PG, composed of Move-R and VPE; while
 - Chinese allows Move-R and VPE, but
 - Chinese disallows PG.

In response to the question in (6), we propose (7).

(7) *Second part of the proposal*

The availability of PG results from a conspiracy of multiple phenomena, including:

- the availability and type of Move-R;
- the availability of VPE; and
- the [E] feature specification of Foc⁰.

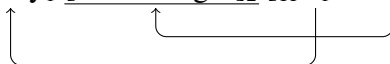
Essentially, Chinese does not have the kind of Move-R involved in English PG, and while Chinese may have focus movement for Move-R, its focus head cannot be specified to elide its complement, unlike languages like Japanese, where this is possible.

In the remainder of this paper, Sections 2 and 3 flesh out the first (4) and second (7) parts of the proposal, respectively. Section 4 concludes.

2. Movement plus deletion vs. empty verb. In English, while PG is typically understood to involve Move-R plus VPE, gapping has received multiple analyses. We list the representative ones in (8–10).

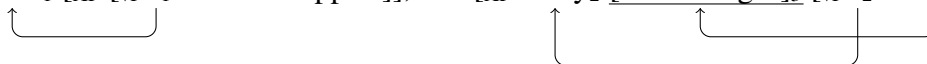
(8) a. *Large conjunct and movement plus deletion (a.o.: Depiante 2000; Boone 2014)*

John **ate** three apples, and Mary₁ [four oranges]₂ [_{TP} t₁ **ate** t₂].



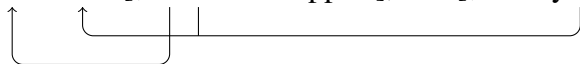
b. *Small conjunct and movement plus deletion (a.o.: Coppock 2001; Lin 2002)*

John₁ [_{XP} [_{VP} t₁ **ate** three apples]], and [_{XP} Mary₂ [four oranges]₃ [_{VP} t₂ **ate** t₃].



(9) a. *ATB movement of V⁰ (Johnson 1994; Paul 1999; Tang 2001)*

John₁ **ate**₂ [_{VP} t₁ t₂ three apples], and [_{VP} Mary t₂ four oranges].



b. *ATB movement of vP (Johnson 2004, 2009)*

John₁ [_{VP} t₁ **ate** t₂]₃ [_{XP} [three apples]₂ t₃], and [_{XP} Mary₁ [four oranges]₂ t₃].



(10) *In-situ and selective spellout (a.o.: Broekhuis 2018)*

John **ate** three apples, and Mary [_{TP} **ate** [four oranges]_F].

While this paper focuses on the movement plus deletion analyses of gapping (8), the data we present may pose challenges for extending the other analyses to Chinese as well.

Instead, we follow Tang (2001) and argue that Chinese gapping-like and PG-like constructions involve a phonologically null verb (i.e., *empty verb*). This section presents four groups of data that distinguish between the two kinds of analyses in (11).

- (11) a. *Movement plus deletion*
 Lisi (should) [four CLF orange]_I [eat t_T]. (cf. Cao 2014; Ye 2024)
- ↑
- b. *Empty verb*
 Lisi (should) ∅_V four CLF orange. (cf. Tang 2001)

2.1. ANTECEDENT LICENSING. The first piece of evidence, reported by Tang (2001), concerns the observation that Chinese verb gaps do not require antecedent licensing (12). This observation can be extended to PG-like constructions (13). As in the examples below, with rich contextual information, gapping-like and PG-like constructions are allowed without overt antecedents.

- (12) *Gapping-like construction*
- a. *Mandarin* (Tang 2001:205, adapted)
 Zhangsan Δ san ge pingguo. (Lisi Δ si ge.)
 Zhangsan three CLF apple Lisi four CLF
 ‘Zhangsan [**bought, ate, etc.**] three apples. (Lisi [**bought, ate, etc.**] four.)’
- b. *Cantonese*
 Zoengsaam Δ saam go pinggwo. (Leisei Δ sei go.)
 Zoengsaam three CLF apple Leisei four CLF
 ‘Zoengsaam [**bought, ate, etc.**] three apples. (Leisei [**bought, ate, etc.**] four.)’

- (13) *PG-like construction*
- a. *Mandarin*
 Zhangsan yinggai Δ san ge pingguo. (Lisi yinggai Δ si ge.)
 Zhangsan should three CLF apple Lisi should four CLF
 ‘Zhangsan should [**buy, eat, etc.**] three apples. (Lisi should [**buy, eat, etc.**] four.)’
- b. *Cantonese*
 Zoengsaam jinggoi Δ saam go pinggwo. (Leisei jinggoi Δ sei go.)
 Zoengsaam should three CLF apple Leisei should four CLF
 ‘Zoengsaam should [**buy, eat, etc.**] three apples. (Leisei should [**buy, eat, etc.**] four.)’

2.2. RESULTATIVE SUFFIXES. The second piece of evidence concerns the resultative suffixes *-del-dao* in Mandarin and *-dak/-dou* in Cantonese. Verbs with these suffixes can be deleted, as in (14), using Mandarin *-de* and Cantonese *-dak* as examples.

(14) *Resultative suffix*

a. *Mandarin*

(Zhe zhi wu,) Zhangsan (yinggai) **tiao-de** hen haokan, danshi Lisi
this CLF dance Zhangsan should dance-RES very beautiful but Lisi
(yinggai) Δ hen nankan.
should very ugly

‘(This dance,) Zhangsan (**should**) **dance(s)** very beautifully, but Lisi [**(should)**
dance(s)] in a very ugly manner.’

b. *Cantonese*

(Ni zek mou,) Zoengsaam (jinggoi) **tiu-dak** hou houtai, daanhai Leisei
this CLF dance Zoengsaam should dance-RES very beautiful but Leisei
(jinggoi) Δ hou naantai.
should very ugly

‘(This dance,) Zoengsaam (**should**) **dance(s)** very beautifully, but Leisei [**(should)**
dance(s)] in a very ugly manner.’

In the second clause, ‘ugly’ is interpreted as describing the event of dancing instead of the subject as a person, suggesting a true gapping-like or PG-like construction rather than a simple subject and predicate combination.

In a movement plus deletion analysis, the second clause would be derived by first moving the resultative complement to a preverbal position and then eliding the VP containing the resultative suffix. Yet, when the verb is not deleted, resultative complements cannot move to a preverbal position (15), undermining the movement plus deletion analysis.

(15) *Resultative complement: XMove-R*

a. *Mandarin*

*Zhangsan (yinggai) [hen haokan]₁ tiao-de t₁.
Zhangsan should very beautiful dance-RES
Intended: ‘Zhangsan (should) dance(s) very beautifully.’

b. *Cantonese*

*Zoengsaam (jinggoi) [hou houtai]₁ tiu-dak t₁.
Zoengsaam should very beautiful dance-RES
Intended: ‘Zoengsaam (should) dance(s) very beautifully.’

Nevertheless, we do not consider this a knock-down argument, as we may need certain movements to be exclusive to ellipsis contexts for English PG anyway.

2.3. ADJUNCT EXCLUSION. A property of English VPE (16) and PG (17) that could be used as evidence against a movement plus deletion analysis of Chinese verb gaps is that they omit verbal adjuncts. In the examples below, the ellipsis site cannot be interpreted as missing the adverb, signaled by the infelicity of negating the adverb as a follow-up.

(16) *English VPE*

- a. Mary hasn’t **secretly dated Bill**, but Sue has [~~**secretly dated Bill**~~], #though not secretly.

- b. John should **quietly eat three apples**, and Mary should [~~quietly eat three apples~~], too.

(17) *English PG*

- a. (Jayaseelan 1990:64, adapted)
Mary hasn't **secretly dated** Bill, but she has [~~secretly dated~~] Harry, #though not secretly.
- b. John should **quietly eat** three apples, and Mary should [~~quietly eat~~] four oranges.

In Chinese, this property is shared by VPE but not shared by PG-like constructions. To elicit this contrast, in (18–19), the adverb is placed in a downward entailing environment. In this configuration, a follow-up that is contradictory to the meaning of the second clause without the adverb is possible only after VPE but not after PG-like constructions, supporting the claim that in PG-like constructions, the verb gap is understood as not containing the adverb.

(18) *VPE*

- a. *Mandarin*
Zhangsan yinggai **manman chi san ge pingguo**, danshi Lisi_i bu yinggai Δ.
Zhangsan should slowly eat three CLF apple but Lisi not should
(Ta_i yinggai kuai yi dian.)
3SG should fast one bit
'Zhangsan should **slowly eat three apples**, but Lisi_i shouldn't [**slowly eat three apples**]. (He_i should eat faster.)'
- b. *Cantonese*
Zoengsaam jinggoi **maanmaan sik saam go pinggwo**, daanhai Leisei_i
Zoengsaam should slowly eat three CLF apple but Leisei
m-jinggoi Δ. (Keoi_i jinggoi faai-di.)
not-should 3SG should fast-a.bit
'Zoengsaam should **slowly eat three apples**, but Leisei_i shouldn't [**slowly eat three apples**]. (He_i should eat faster.)'

(19) *PG-like construction*

- a. *Mandarin*
Zhangsan yinggai **manman chi san ge pingguo**, danshi Lisi_i bu yinggai Δ
Zhangsan should slowly eat three CLF apple but Lisi not should
san ge. (#Ta_i yinggai kuai yi dian.)
three CLF 3SG should fast one bit
'Zhangsan should **slowly eat** three apples, but Lisi_i should not [(***slowly**) eat] three.
(#He_i should eat faster.)'
- b. *Cantonese*
Zoengsaam jinggoi **maanmaan sik saam go pinggwo**, daanhai Leisei_i m-jinggoi
Zoengsaam should slowly eat three CLF apple but Leisei not-should
Δ saam go. (#Keoi_i jinggoi faai-di.)
three CLF 3SG should fast-a.bit
'Zoengsaam should **slowly eat** three apples, but Leisei_i shouldn't [(***slowly**) eat] three. (#He_i should eat faster.)'

This contrast between VPE and PG-like constructions in Chinese suggests that the latter do not involve the former.

2.4. PG-LIKE CONSTRUCTION–LICENSING HEADS. Our last piece of evidence comes from the range of configurations that license Chinese PG-like constructions. Under a movement plus deletion analysis, these configurations should correlate with those that allow VPE in Chinese, which are (raising) modals (e.g., Mandarin *yinggai* ‘should’ and Cantonese *jinggoi* ‘should’ in earlier examples), preverbal aspects (20), and control verbs (21) (Lee & Pan 2024).

(20) *Preverbal aspect: ✓VPE*

a. *Mandarin*

Zhangsan you **manman chi san ge pingguo**. Lisi ye you Δ.

Zhangsan PFV slowly eat three CLF apple Lisi also PFV

‘Zhangsan **slowly ate three apples**. Lisi did [**slowly eat three apples**], too.’

b. *Cantonese*

Zoengsaam jau **maanmaan sik saam go pinggwo**. Leisei dou jau Δ.

Zoengsaam PFV slowly eat three CLF apple Leisei also PFV

‘Zoengsaam **slowly ate three apples**. Leisei did [**slowly eat three apples**], too.’

(21) *Control verb: ✓VPE*

a. *Mandarin*

Zhangsan xiang **manman chi san ge pingguo**. Lisi ye xiang Δ.

Zhangsan want slowly eat three CLF apple Lisi also want

‘Zhangsan wants to **slowly eat three apples**. Lisi wants to [**slowly eat three apples**], too.’

b. *Cantonese*

Zoengsaam soeng **maanmaan sik saam go pinggwo**. Leisei dou soeng Δ.

Zoengsaam want slowly eat three CLF apple Leisei also want

‘Zoengsaam wants to **slowly eat three apples**. Leisei wants to [**slowly eat three apples**], too.’

Although both allow VPE, there is a distinction between preverbal aspects and control verbs. A preverbal aspect does not allow moving an internal argument to the preverbal position within its complement (22), but a control verb does (23). (See Chen & Yip 2025 for discussion of the constraints on this movement.)

(22) *Preverbal aspect: ✗Move-R*

a. *Mandarin*

*Zhangsan you [(zhe) san ge pingguo]₁ manman chi t₁.

Zhangsan PFV this three CLF apple slowly eat

Intended: ‘Zhangsan slowly ate these three apples.’

b. *Cantonese*

*Zoengsaam jau [(ni) saam go pinggwo]₁ maanmaan sik t₁.

Zoengsaam PFV this three CLF apple slowly eat

Intended: ‘Zoengsaam slowly ate these three apples.’

(23) *Control verb: ✓Move-R*

a. *Mandarin*

Zhangsan xiang [zhe san ge pingguo]₁ manman chi t₁.
Zhangsan want this three CLF apple slowly eat
'Zhangsan wants to slowly eat these three apples.'

b. *Cantonese*

Zoengsaam soeng [ni saam go pinggwo]₁ maanmaan sik t₁.
Zoengsaam want this three CLF apple slowly eat
'Zoengsaam wants to slowly eat these three apples.'

Given (22–23), the movement plus deletion analysis would predict that control verbs allow PG-like constructions, but preverbal aspects do not. This prediction is indeed borne out for preverbal aspects, as in (24), but not for control verbs, which turn out to also disallow PG-like constructions, as in (25).

(24) *Preverbal aspect: ✗PG-like construction*

a. *Mandarin*

Zhangsan you (**manman**) **chi** san ge pingguo. (*Lisi you Δ si ge.)
Zhangsan PFV slowly eat three CLF apple Lisi PFV four CLF
'Zhangsan (**slowly**) ate three apples. (*Lisi did [(**slowly**) eat] four.)'

b. *Cantonese*

Zoengsaam jau (**maanmaan**) **sik** saam go pinggwo. (*Leisei jau Δ sei go.)
Zoengsaam PFV slowly eat three CLF apple Leisei PFV four CLF
'Zoengsaam (**slowly**) ate three apples. (*Leisei did [(**slowly**) eat] four.)'

(25) *Control verb: ✗PG-like construction*

a. *Mandarin*

Zhangsan xiang (**manman**) **chi** san ge pingguo. (*Lisi xiang Δ si ge.)
Zhangsan want slowly eat three CLF apple Lisi want four CLF
'Zhangsan wants to (**slowly**) eat three apples. (*Lisi wants to [(**slowly**) eat] four.)'

b. *Cantonese*

Zoengsaam soeng (**maanmaan**) **sik** saam go pinggwo. (*Leisei soeng Δ sei
Zoengsaam want slowly eat three CLF apple Leisei want four
go.)
CLF
'Zoengsaam wants to (**slowly**) eat three apples. (*Leisei wants to [(**slowly**) eat] four.)'

Moreover, some other modals like Mandarin *neng(gou)* and Cantonese *nanggau* 'can', despite allowing Move-R and VPE independently just like Mandarin *yinggai* and Cantonese *jinggoi* 'should', do not allow PG-like constructions (26), either, likely because they fall into the control verb category. Examples showing the contrast between *yinggai* 'should' and *neng* 'can' in Mandarin from the literature are provided in (27).

(26) ‘Can’: *XPG-like construction*

a. *Mandarin*

Zhangsan neng(gou) (**manman**) chi san ge pingguo. (*Lisi neng(gou) Δ si
 Zhangsan can slowly eat three CLF apple Lisi can four
 ge.)
 CLF

‘Zhangsan can (**slowly**) **eat** three apples. (*Lisi can [(**slowly**) **eat**] four.)’

b. *Cantonese*

Zoengsaam nanggau (**maanmaan**) sik saam go pinggwō. (*Leisei nanggau Δ
 Zoengsaam can slowly eat three CLF apple Leisei can
 sei go.)
 four CLF

‘Zoengsaam can (**slowly**) **eat** three apples. (*Leisei can [(**slowly**) **eat**] four.)’

(27) *Mandarin*

a. (Wei 2008:82)

Zhangsan yinggai **chi** san wan. Lisi yinggai Δ wu wan.
 Zhangsan should eat three bowl Lisi should five bowl
 ‘Zhangsan should **eat** three bowls (of rice). Lisi should [**eat**] five bowls (of rice).’

b. (Ye 2024:331)

(What kind of alcohol can everyone **bring**?)

*Zhangsan neng Δ pijiu. Lisi neng Δ baijiu.

Zhangsan can beer Lisi can wine

Intended: ‘Zhangsan can [**bring**] beer. Lisi can [**bring**] wine.’

The observations in this subsection are summarized in Table 1. While the behaviors of raising modals and preverbal aspects are expected under the movement plus deletion analysis, it fails to capture the unavailability of PG-like construction under control verbs.

	Raising modal	Preverbal aspect	Control verb
VPE	✓	✓	✓
Move-R	✓	✗	✓
PG-like construction	✓	✗	✗

Table 1. Chinese VPE-licensing heads

3. PG typology. In sum, the data presented in Section 2 support an empty verb analysis over a movement plus deletion analysis. A claim derived from this conclusion is that Chinese does not allow a movement plus deletion derivation of PG, while it does allow Move-R and VPE. This section aims to account for why this is so.

3.1. JAPANESE PG. Japanese is another language that has been argued to allow PG, alongside verb raising out of the ellipsis site (Kim 1997; Funakoshi 2016; Tanaka & Hayashi 2018). Its evidence includes the recoverability of VP adjuncts, similar to English VPE. In (28), the ellipsis site is interpreted as containing ‘half a year’.

- (28) *Japanese* (Tanaka & Hayashi 2018:5)
 John-wa NYU-ni-wa **han-toshi ryūgaku** su-ru-ga, MIT-ni-wa Δ
 John-TOP NYU-at-TOP half-year study.abroad do-NPST-but MIT-at-TOP
 shi-na-i.
 do-NEG-NPST
 ‘John will **study abroad for half a year** at NYU, but he won’t [**study abroad for half a year**] at MIT.’

We adopt Johnson’s (2008) view that Move-R in English PG is overt QR and attribute the lack of English-style PG in Chinese to its lack of overt QR (at least for nominals, cf. Lee 2022, 2024). We also adopt Kim’s (1997) view that Japanese Move-R is focus movement, illustrated in (29), and discuss why Chinese disallows Japanese-style PG in the next subsection.

- (29) *Derivation of Japanese PG*
 [TP [FocP MIT-at-TOP₁ [VP t₁ half-year study.abroad t₂] do₂-NEG-NPST]
-

3.2. FOC P LICENSING PARAMETER. The absence of Japanese-style PG in Chinese can be accounted for by Lee’s (2023) FocP licensing parameter (30), assuming that focus movement lands in a FocP that takes the VP to be elided as its complement. We implement this parameter as a distinction in the feature specification of focus heads: Japanese Foc⁰ must bear [E], whereas Chinese Foc⁰ must not. Since Chinese Foc⁰ does not bear [E], it cannot elide its complement after focus movement, thus blocking Japanese-style PG (31).

- (30) *FocP licensing parameter proposed in Lee 2023*
 a. *Japanese*
 A FocP is only licensed by a covert complement.
 b. *Chinese*
 A FocP is only licensed by an overt complement.

- (31) *Chinese Foc⁰ complement unelidable* \rightsquigarrow \times PG
 *want [FocP [this cup milk]₁ [VP slowly drink t₁]]
-

This distinction between Japanese and Chinese in the feature specification of Foc⁰ is independently motivated by the observation that right dislocation (RD) of focused constituents is allowed in Japanese but not in Chinese. For example, in Japanese (32), focused constituents with ‘only’ may be rightward dislocated and follow a sentence-final particle, a process not possible in Mandarin (33) or Cantonese (34).

- (32) *Japanese* (Nakagawa et al. 2008:5)
 Kaet-te ki-ta yo inu-dake-wa.
 return-and come-PST SFP dog-only-TOP
 ‘Only the dog came back.’

(33) *Mandarin*

- a. *Focus without RD: ✓*
Zhiyou wo mai-le zhe ben shu la.
only 1SG buy-PFV this CLF book SFP
'Only I bought this book.'
- b. *No focus in RD: ✓*
Mai-le zhe ben shu la wo.
buy-PFV this CLF book SFP 1SG
'I bought this book.'
- c. *Focus in RD: ✗* (Lee 2023:467, translated into Mandarin)
*Mai-le zhe ben shu la zhiyou wo.
buy-PFV this CLF book SFP only 1SG
Intended: 'Only I bought this book.'

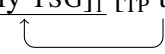
(34) *Cantonese*

- a. *Focus without RD: ✓*
Zinghai ngo maai-zo ni bun syu zaa3.
only 1SG buy-PFV this CLF book SFP
'Only I bought this book.'
- b. *No focus in RD: ✓*
Maai-zo ni bun syu zaa3 ngo.
buy-PFV this CLF book SFP 1SG
'I bought this book.'
- c. *Focus in RD: ✗* (Lee 2023:467)
*Maai-zo ni bun syu zaa3 zinghai ngo.
buy-PFV this CLF book SFP only 1SG
Intended: 'Only I bought this book.'

We can treat RD of focused constituents as involving movement of the dislocated element to FocP followed by ellipsis in the second clause under a biclausal analysis (Cheung 2015; Yip 2025). On this view, the impossibility of rightward dislocating 'only' in Chinese follows from the focus head's inability to elide its complement after moving the focused constituent (35).

(35) *Chinese Foc⁰ complement unelidable* \rightsquigarrow *✗focus in RD*

*[_{TP} [~~only~~ 1SG] buy-PFV this CLF book SFP] [_{FocP} [only 1SG]₁ [_{TP} t₁ buy-PFV this CLF book SFP]]



3.3. FULL PROPOSAL. The empirical picture suggests an account of PG in which its availability in a language results from the interaction of multiple syntactic factors, including whether overt QR, VPE, and focus movement are available, as well as whether focus heads can bear the [E] feature. Their interaction is illustrated in Table 2, where an empty cell indicates that the setting does not impact the availability of PG.

Put differently, English and Japanese demonstrate that a language may allow PG through at least two routes. The English route (Type I) is overt QR plus VPE, whereas the Japanese route

Type (example)	I (English)	II	III (Japanese)	IV (Chinese)	V
Move-R	✓overt QR	✓overt QR	✓focus movement	✓focus movement	✗
VPE	✓	✗			
Foc ⁰ with [E]			✓	✗	
PG	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗

Table 2. PG typology

(Type III) is focus movement plus covert complement FocP licensing. In a language without PG, at least one component in each route must be blocked (Types II, IV, and V).

3.4. TYPING UP LOOSE ENDS. Under the current account, Chinese does not share English-style PG because it does not allow the corresponding movement mechanism, whereas Chinese does not share Japanese-style PG because it does not allow the corresponding deletion mechanism. One might then ask why Chinese forbids a hybrid of English and Japanese, in which PG arises via VPE triggered after focus movement. In fact, such a derivation is possible in the language, but it does not yield PG. Assuming that Chinese VPE is licensed by matrix v^0 (Tsai 2015; Law & Ndayiragije 2017; Lee & Pan 2024), since the landing site of the kind of focus movement in need is sandwiched between the matrix verb and the embedded verb in Chinese, VPE would elide the entire complement of the matrix verb with the focused constituent included (36). This means that no remnant can escape VPE and surface after the matrix verb in Chinese, thereby blocking this potential third route to PG.

(36) *Focus movement and VPE*

a. *Mandarin*

Zhangsan xiang zhe san ge pingguo manman chi. Lisi ye xiang Δ .
 Zhangsan want this three CLF apple slowly eat Lisi also want
 ‘Zhangsan wants to **slowly eat these three apples**. Lisi wants to [**slowly eat these three apples**], too.’

b. *Cantonese*

Zoengsaam soeng ni saam go pinggwō maanmaan sik. Leisei dou soeng Δ .
 Zoengsaam want this three CLF apple slowly eat Leisei also want
 ‘Zoengsaam wants to **slowly eat these three apples**. Leisei wants to [**slowly eat these three apples**], too.’

Further, a prediction of the current account is that Chinese should not have fragment answers, if fragment answers are analyzed as involving focus movement of the fragment followed by deletion of the rest of the clause. This prediction is not borne out. Chinese does allow fragment answers, as in (37).

(37) *Mandarin* (Li & Wei 2023:5)

- a. Ta kanjian-le shei (ne)?
 3SG see-PFV who Q
 ‘Who did he see?’

- b. (*Shi) Lisi. (Ta kanjian-le Lisi.)
 COP Lisi 3SG see-PFV Lisi
 ‘Lisi. (He saw Lisi.)’

As such, our PG typology favors the proposal that at least in Chinese, fragment answers are best analyzed as genuine fragments (Stainton 2006; Hall 2019) rather than as remnants of full clausal structures. This approach also explains several additional properties of Chinese fragment answers (Li & Wei 2023). First, they cannot be coordinated with full clauses or introduced by a clausal conjunct. Second, they do not display island effects, which follow naturally if no movement is involved in their derivation.

4. Conclusion. The constructions that resemble gapping and PG on the surface in Chinese languages are not derived by movement plus deletion but are better accounted for under the empty verb analysis. As such, the long-standing view that Chinese lacks English-style gapping should be extended to PG as well. Despite allowing focus movement and VPE, Mandarin and Cantonese disallow PG because their focus heads cannot elide their complements, unlike languages like Japanese, a crosslinguistic contrast further supported by their distinction in the availability of rightward dislocating focused constituents. In conclusion, PG does not reduce to a single property but instead arises from the interaction of several syntactic phenomena, including overt QR, VPE, focus movement, and the [E] feature specification of focus heads.

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