



Multiple Right Dislocation in Standard Arabic

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Abstract

This paper investigates whether the insight of Agbayani and Ishii (2025) on the structure of Japanese multiple Right Dislocation can be extended to Standard Arabic. Standard Arabic confirms the anti-iterative conclusion of Agbayani and Ishii's (2025) analysis of Japanese multiple Right Dislocation but not its single-versus-multiple partition. Japanese multiple Right Dislocation is understood to be a PF/prosodic operation rather than a narrow-syntactic movement operation. Standard Arabic supports this broader claim, but only insofar as the distinction between ordinary postverbal elements and elements that appear as afterthoughts following clauses is maintained. Thus, the multiple strings of right-peripheral elements in Standard Arabic can best be analyzed as a post-clausal prosodic/discourse package. The paper therefore rejects a direct transfer of the Japanese single-versus-multiple split to Standard Arabic, while preserving the central theoretical result that apparent multiple rightward displacement belongs at the syntax-PF interface rather than in iterative narrow syntax.

1. Introduction

Right-dislocation phenomena are problematic for syntactic theory due to the appearance of displacement to the right edge of a clause without exhibiting the properties of ordinary movement within narrow syntax. The problem is exacerbated in languages that allow more than one constituent to appear in the right-peripheral position of a clause.

Agbayani and Ishii (2025) propose an analysis of Japanese that resolves the problem of multiple right-peripheral strings in the language. Their analysis holds that single right-peripheral strings in Japanese are derived through narrow-syntactic movement, while the phenomenon of multiple right-peripheral strings in Japanese is derived through Prosodic Right Dislocation in the phonological component (PF). Japanese exhibits a split between single and multiple Right Dislocation that supports Prosodic Right Dislocation. The arguments of Agbayani and Ishii (2025) are based on evidence that Right Dislocation in Japanese is insensitive to island constraints, lacks the effects of reconstruction on the language, and exhibits prosodic behaviors that suggest that multiple right-peripheral strings are prosodically one constituent. Thus, prosodic right-peripheral strings exhibit a uniqueness in their derivation of Right Dislocation: it is a single movement within PF that affects a single prosodic constituent.

The goal of this paper is to investigate whether the proposal of Agbayani and Ishii (2025) can be applied to Standard Arabic. Standard Arabic has VSO word order, employs resumptive clitics, and permits null subjects. The right edge of the clause in Standard Arabic can contain a postverbal determiner, an afterthought, and an appositive element. Thus, Standard Arabic Right

Dislocation cannot be analyzed without first distinguishing between postverbal elements that are part of the clause and afterthought elements that are clause-external. The relevance of Arabic to discussion of the split between syntax and prosody is that Arabic contains both clause-internal postverbal material and clause-external afterthought material. The fact that Arabic has developed both types of phenomena allows for the discussion of where the Right Dislocation phenomenon should be located in the grammar.

The result of the analysis of Arabic Right Dislocation will be partial support for the proposal of Agbayani and Ishii (2025). Arabic right-peripheral strings can be analyzed as prosodic phenomena rather than narrow-syntactic movements. However, because Arabic has Right Dislocation phenomena at the right edge of the clause that are not prosodic but instead clause-internal and resumptive, the split that exists between single and multiple right-peripheral phenomena in Japanese does not translate to Arabic. Thus, Arabic Right Dislocation can be analyzed as a phenomenon that occurs at the interface between syntax and prosody, but the division of labor between syntax and PF is different from Japanese.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses the proposal of Agbayani and Ishii (2025) regarding Japanese Right Dislocation, as well as the literature on Arabic language phenomena related to the right periphery of clauses. Section 3 presents the theoretical framework and the criteria that will be used to define the phenomenon of right dislocation in Standard Arabic. Section 4 presents the data used to support the argument of this paper. Section 5 presents the evidence from Arabic that supports the argument. Section 6 presents a direct evaluation of the proposal of Agbayani and Ishii (2025) as applied to Standard Arabic, including arguments for where the proposal is viable, where it requires modification, and where it fails. Finally, Section 7 presents the conclusions of this paper.

2. Literature Review and Research Gap

2.1. The Japanese Proposal

The immediate point of departure is Agbayani and Ishii's (2025) analysis of Japanese multiple Right Dislocation. Unlike single Right Dislocation, multiple Right Dislocation is insensitive to island constraints, reconstruction-like effects, and displays different behavior in prosodic phrase-level observations. These factors, among others, indicate that Japanese multiple Right Dislocation is not derived in narrow syntax, but rather at the PF level through the phenomenon, in their terminology, of Prosodic Right Dislocation (Agbayani & Ishii, 2025).

The proposal that Prosodic Right Dislocation occurs at PF rests on the Universal Uniqueness Principle, which states that movement only ever applies once to a constituent at the edge of a domain. The syntactic domain considered for this principle is CP, while the prosodic domain is the intonational phrase. Thus, the proposal is that the apparent ability of Japanese to have multiple instances of Right Dislocation is not the result of multiple instances of syntactic movement within a single syntactic domain, but that the elements that are Right Dislocated are grouped into a single prosodic constituent. Japanese Right Dislocation, especially in the case of multiple Right Dislocation, therefore indicates that apparent multiple Right Dislocation is actually prosodic rather than syntactic.

These two elements of the proposal by Agbayani and Ishii (2025) are testable within Arabic. Most importantly, the proposal that elements that are Right Dislocated should not be automatically considered to be derived through iterative narrow syntactic movement can be tested. In addition, it is possible to test for signs of this type of movement through evaluation of island sensitivity, reconstruction-like effects, and prosodic constituency; elements that will be evaluated in Section 6.

2.2. Clause Structure and Clause-Edge Phenomena in Standard Arabic

Standard Arabic has features that make direct application of the proposal to Arabic problematic. First, Standard Arabic has a VSO base order, so subjects appearing after the verb are not an indication of Right Dislocation (Benmamoun, 2000; Aoun et al., 2010). Additionally,

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Arabic has clitic resumption, allowing edge elements to be placed at the edge of a clause without being incorporated into the clause itself. Finally, Arabic allows null subjects within clauses.

Standard Arabic literature repeatedly discusses these features. Aoun, Benmamoun, and Choueiri (2010) indicate that focus elements in the language are different from topical elements. Focus elements may move within a clause, have gaps, and preserve case. Clitic elements, in contrast, exhibit different behaviors from both focus and topical elements. Alazzawie (2019) divides clause structure into two components: a recursive, base-generated topic element, and a non-recursive, movement-derived focus element. Topics may be resumed and are insensitive to island constraints. Focus elements are not resumed and are not insensitive to island constraints. These distinctions of Arabic clause structure indicate that a distinction is made in the language between types of elements that are movement-related versus those that are resumptive-related. Thus, any analysis of the right periphery in Arabic should avoid using position within the clause as a diagnostic of the structure of those elements.

That recommendation is strengthened by the observation of nominal apposition in Modern Standard Arabic. Alqarni and Alanazi (2022) indicate that nominal apposition is heterogeneous in the language; some appositional elements are clause-internal, others are clause-external, and others are appositional. Thus, the categorization of the right periphery must make a distinction among these categories to reflect differences in the structure of the appositive elements.

These discussions show that clause-edge interpretation cannot be reduced to linear position alone. The grammar must distinguish material licensed in narrow syntax from material integrated only at the syntax-prosody interface. This distinction is essential if peripheral sequences are to be analyzed without conflating VSO order and afterthought structures.

2.3. Arabic Clause-Edge Structure and the Research Gap

The Arabic literature (Aoun et al., 2010; Alazzawie, 2019; Alqarni & Alanazi, 2022) provides both what is needed to support the Japanese proposal on the role of Prosodic Right Dislocation and what it does not provide. It distinguishes between movement-derived and resumption-derived clause-edge material and provides a base clause structure in which postverbal arguments are part of ordinary syntax. However, it does not provide a direct analysis of multiple right-peripheral strings in a framework that tests whether they are derived by iterative rightward movement or by PF/discourse packaging.

What remains unresolved is whether Standard Arabic supports the broader anti-iterative core of the Japanese analysis once those categories are disentangled. By anti-iterative, we mean the claim that an apparent sequence of multiple right-peripheral constituents is not derived by repeated applications of narrow-syntactic rightward movement. This paper addresses that question: it asks whether, once clause-internal postverbal syntax is separated from right-peripheral afterthought, Standard Arabic supports the claim that multiple right-peripheral strings are not derived by iterative narrow-syntactic movement.

The answer argued here is yes, but only partially. Standard Arabic supports the anti-iterative and PF-oriented core of the Japanese proposal. It does not support the direct transfer of the Japanese partition between single syntactic Right Dislocation and multiple prosodic Right Dislocation.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Minimalist Assumptions

The analysis adopts a standard Minimalist architecture: Merge is the sole operation responsible for building structure. Arguments are merged into vP. Inflection is projected above vP. Therefore, a postverbal DP fulfilling argument structure is clause-internal. A DP that occurs after the main clause is complete and whose role within the clause is fulfilled by some clitic or agreement is an afterthought.

Furthermore, derivation proceeds from narrow-syntactic forms to phonological forms. If a clause is syntactically complete prior to the appearance of an XP (in the relevant examples, a DP), then that XP is not fulfilling a clause-internal role.

Terminological precision is necessary here. We use the term Prosodic Right Dislocation to refer to the operation proposed by Agbayani and Ishii (2025) for Japanese multiple Right Dislocation. The term PF movement refers to the class of operations located within the phonological component of the language. The notion of afterthought is not a derivational term but an interpretive one; it refers to information that is external to the clause itself but which helps to identify or clarify the content of that clause.

Finally, we adopt the anti-iterative assumptions behind the proposal of Agbayani and Ishii (2025). The appearance of multiple right-peripheral elements does not by itself imply multiple right-peripheral movement operations; such a claim has to be proven by the movement theory for the language in question. Thus, the movement theory for the examples in this paper would have to show that the movement of the right-peripheral elements is prosodic in nature in order to override the anti-iterative arguments advanced in this paper.

3.2. What Counts as Right Dislocation in Standard Arabic

Arabic permits arguments to appear in a postverbal position. Thus, postverbality alone is not indicative of a right-peripheral structure. In order to be classified as right-dislocated or afterthought-like in Arabic, one of the following must be true of the right-peripheral phrase in question:

- The clause is structurally complete without the right-peripheral phrase.
- The right-peripheral phrase has an afterthought interpretation.
- The right-peripheral phrase is separated from the rest of the clause by a discourse or prosodic break. (In the examples that follow, this is represented by a comma.)
- The final phrase is not required for argument licensing.

Table 1. Diagnostic criteria for identifying right dislocation in Standard Arabic

Criterion	Clause-internal postverbal XP	Right-peripheral afterthought
Clause complete before final XP appears	No	Yes
Argument position internally saturated by clitic/agreement	No	Typically yes
Final XP required for core argument licensing	Yes	No
Prosodic/discourse break before final XP	Not required	Typically present
Main function	Clause-internal argument	Identification / clarification / afterthought

These criteria are designed to prevent ordinary VSO order from being misclassified as right dislocation. This exclusion is reflected in Section 5.1.

3.3. Comparative Hypothesis

The hypothesis posited in this paper is the following:

The Restricted PF Right-Periphery Hypothesis

In Standard Arabic, apparent multiple right-peripheral displacement is not the result of multiple right-peripheral movement operations at the level of narrow syntax. Instead, after separating the language's ordinary postverbal syntax from its afterthought clauses, any multiple right-peripheral strings are best treated as a single afterthought relative to the clause, as are single right-peripheral afterthoughts in the resumptive pronouns of the language.

This hypothesis deliberately weakens the Japanese claim. It preserves the anti-iterative core, but does not assume the same single-versus-multiple partition.

3.4. What Would Count as Support, Modification, or Failure

The Japanese proposal would carry over directly if Standard Arabic showed right-peripheral single displacements, right-peripheral multiple displacements, and arguments in the right periphery that are not resumptive.

The proposal would require some modification to account for examples in Standard Arabic that support the anti-iterative hypothesis, but for which the single-versus-multiple distinction does not hold.

The proposal would fail if the examples of right-peripheral elements in Arabic are best analyzed as clause-internal elements or apposition.

The proposal would receive some support but would require some modification in the case of Standard Arabic. This analysis is made explicit in Section 6 of this paper.

4. Methodology

4.1. Data: Standard Arabic

The data used in the analysis consist of carefully constructed Standard Arabic examples adapted from the Leipzig Corpora Collection. The examples were verified against Standard Arabic grammars as well as judgment from native speakers. The examples are intentionally conservative. They use well-established features of the language: VSO order, object clitics, PP resumption, null subjects, and clause-edge afterthought interpretation.

The study does not aim to analyze the data quantitatively or to provide instrumental phonetic evidence for Arabic prosodic phrasing. Rather, the goal is to determine whether the grammar of right-peripheral strings in Standard Arabic is better analyzed in narrow syntax or at the syntax-PF interface.

4.2. Qualitative Analytical Approach

The analysis uses four diagnostics. The first diagnostic contrasts ordinary postverbal word order with examples that have an afterthought interpretation. The second diagnostic examines clauses that have single or multiple right-peripheral strings but whose arguments are satisfied with resumptive clitics. The third diagnostic examines embedded clauses or reconstructed word orders to test whether right-peripheral strings in Standard Arabic behave as extracted material or as descriptors of material that is already understood within the clause. The fourth diagnostic examines the prosodic aspects of the language. Since there will be no acoustic analysis, this diagnostic relies on the punctuation and structure of right-peripheral strings to indicate that the clause is already complete before the right-peripheral strings appear.

The advantage of these diagnostics is that they test the Japanese proposal against Standard Arabic using diagnostics that are structurally meaningful for Standard Arabic itself.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Ordinary Postverbal Order Is Not Right Dislocation

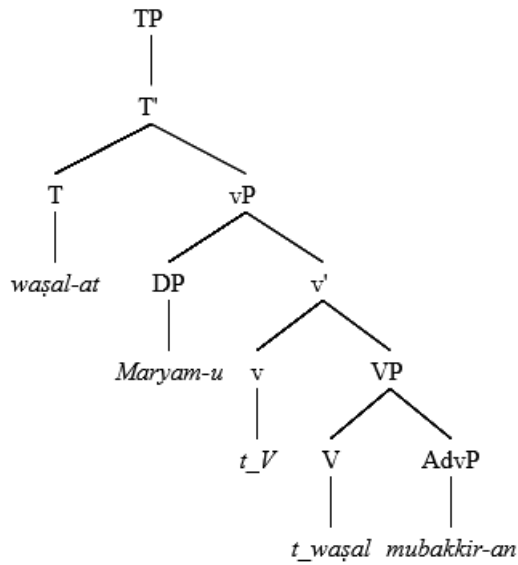
The first task is to distinguish between ordinary VSO word order and genuine right-peripheral afterthoughts. As defined in Section 3.2, a right-dislocation analysis is justified only if the clause is complete before the final word within that clause appears.

(1a)

waṣal-at Maryam-u mubakkir-an
arrive-PFV.3F.SG Maryam-NOM early-ACC
'Maryam arrived early.'

The subject of the clause is not surface-internal within this clause. The clause is not complete prior to the appearance of the subject, indicating that this is not an instance of right dislocation.

Figure 1A. Clause-internal VSO structure

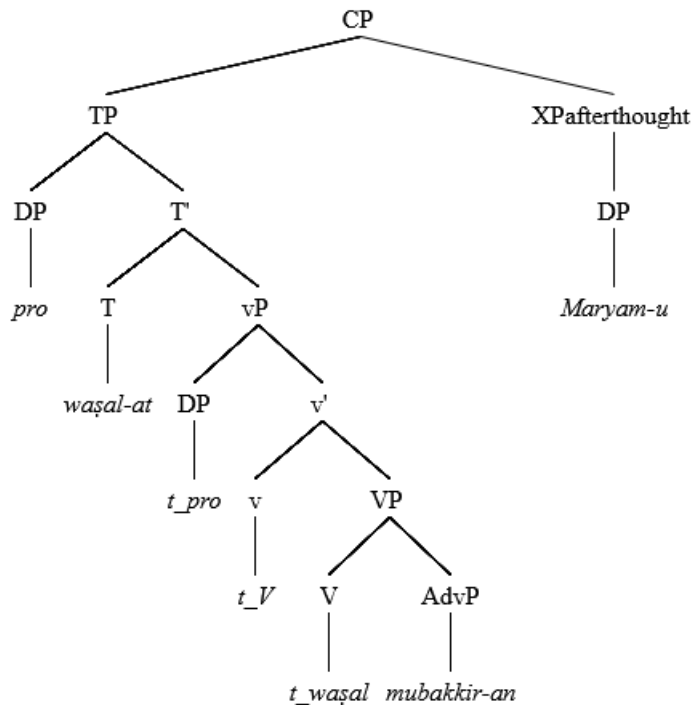


(1b)

waṣal-at mubakkir-an, Maryam-u
 arrive-PFV.3F.SG early-ACC Maryam-NOM
 ‘She arrived early; Maryam.’

The clause is complete prior to the appearance of the final DP. Thus, the right-peripheral position of this final DP indicates that it is an afterthought referring to the subject of the clause.

Figure 1B. Clause-complete afterthought structure



These examples establish a baseline for the remaining discussions of afterthoughts in Standard Arabic clauses. Without this, the remaining argument would collapse ordinary VSO syntax and clause-external afterthought into one category.

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The contrast between (1a) and (1b) also demonstrates the way in which Table 1 is to be used in the remainder of the paper. Example (1a) fails each of the diagnostics for right dislocation: the clause is not complete before the final DP appears, the DP is required for argument licensing, and there is no resumptive element in that clause. Example (1b) satisfies each of the criteria for right dislocation: the clause is complete before the final DP is pronounced, the final element is not required for licensing arguments, and its interpretation is essentially afterthought-like. Table 1 provides the classificatory procedure for the analyses presented in Sections 5.2 through 5.5.

5.2. Single Right-Peripheral Afterthought with Object Resumption

An example with an overtly saturated object within the clause shows that the object cannot be the subject of the right-peripheral afterthought.

(2a)

qaraʿt-tu hādhā al-kitāb-a ʿamsi
 read-PFV.1SG this DEF-book-ACC yesterday
 ‘I read this book yesterday.’

The clause contains its object within the clause; the object is not right-peripheral to the verb. Therefore, this is an ordinary sentence.

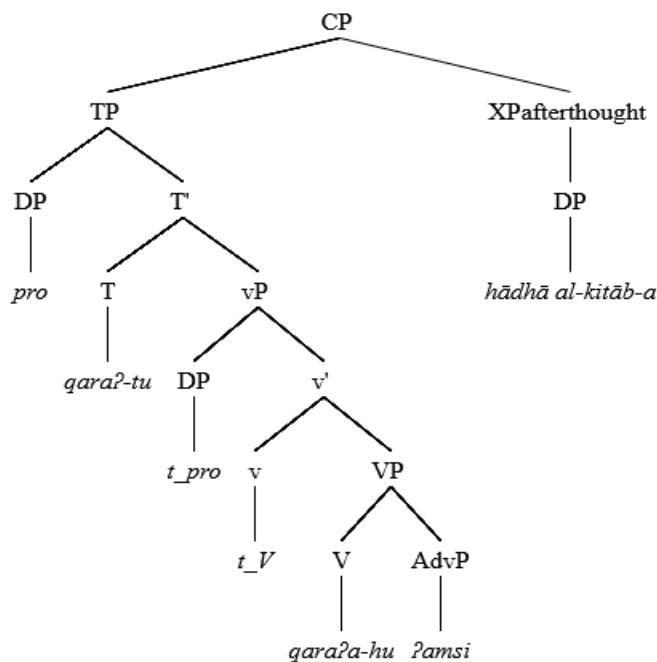
(2b)

qaraʿt-tu-hu ʿamsi, hādhā al-kitāb-a
 read-PFV-1SG-it yesterday this DEF-book-ACC
 ‘I read it yesterday; this book.’

The object is represented within the clause by the clitic -hu. Thus, the final DP is an afterthought.

By the criteria in Table 1, example (2b) has the right-peripheral afterthought structure, not the clause-internal object structure: the clause is complete before the final DP appears, and the object position is filled by resumption within the clause.

Figure 2. Single right-peripheral afterthought with resumptive object



This example helps to refine the Japanese proposal. In Japanese, single right dislocation can be understood as a syntactic phenomenon. Yet in Standard Arabic, examples of single right-peripheral afterthoughts occur naturally within clauses without requiring the notion of extraction. Consequently, the proposal of partitioning the examples into single versus multiple right-peripheral afterthoughts cannot be assumed a priori.

5.3. Multiple Right-Peripheral Strings

The next question considers whether Standard Arabic clauses permit more than one right-peripheral string to appear within the clause.

(3a)

ʿarsal-tu hādhā al-taqrīr-a ʿilā Khālīd-in ʿamsi
 send-PFV.1SG this DEF-report-ACC to Khalid-GEN yesterday
 ‘I sent this report to Khalid yesterday.’

The object and goal of the action represented in this clause are contained within the clause itself. Thus, this sentence is ordinary.

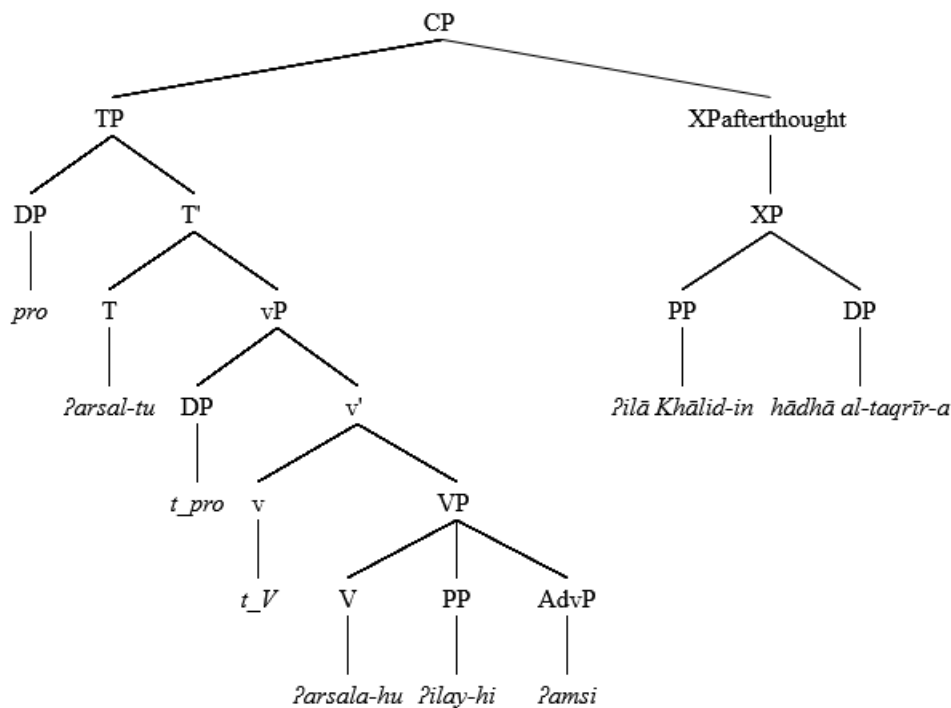
(3b)

ʿarsal-tu-hu ʿilā-hi ʿamsi, ʿilā Khālīd-in, hādhā al-taqrīr-a
 send-PFV-1SG-it to-him yesterday to Khalid-GEN this DEF-report-ACC
 ‘I sent it to him yesterday; to Khalid, this report.’

In this clause, the right-peripheral phrases can be understood as fulfilled by the clitic and by the prepositions indicating the object of the clause. Thus, the remainder of the clause is treated as a single afterthought rather than as two independent right-peripheral afterthought arguments to the verb.

Relative to Table 1, the decisive factors are again clausal completeness and resumptive support: once the object and goal are represented internally, the final PP and DP are not required for argument structure and are therefore classified as a clause-external package.

Figure 3. Preferred analysis of (3b)



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This example for Standard Arabic clauses is the strongest analogue to Japanese with multiple right-peripheral afterthoughts. While it is possible that the clause could require two movements of the right-peripheral phrases relative to the clause, the clause-final analysis is more economical: the syntax of the clause creates the entire clause (with clitics), while the phrase-final phase manages the grouping of right-peripheral afterthoughts as a single continuation rather than as two separate afterthoughts.

5.4. Embedded Clauses and the Anti-Extractive Result

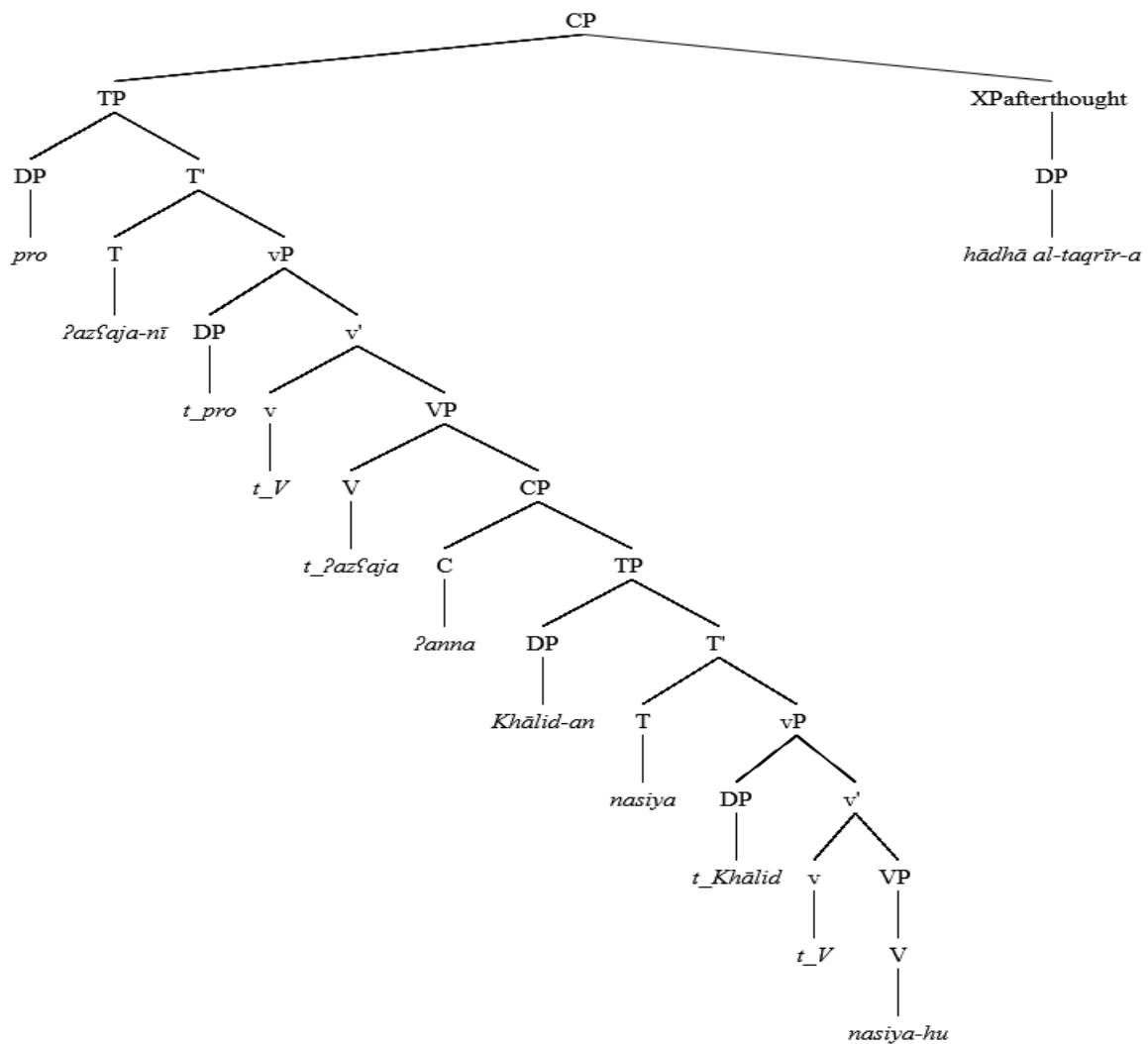
Agbayani and Ishii's (2025) arguments based on island effects and LF material do not appear directly in Standard Arabic. This is mainly because resumption already weakens the motivation to extract a constituent. Yet embedded clauses show that the afterthought can be interpreted across a clause boundary.

(4)

'aḏ 'aja-nī 'anna Khālīd-an nasīya-hu, hādhā al-taqrīr-a
 upset-PFV.3MSG-me COMP Khalid-ACC forget-PFV.3MSG-it this DEF-report-ACC
 'It upset me that Khalid forgot it; this report.'

In this clause, the embedded clause's object is marked by the clitic pronoun -hu. The pronoun refers back to the same clause's subject. Thus, no movement or extraction is necessary to understand the embedded clause.

Figure 4. Embedded clause plus external afterthought



(5)

'az 'aja-nī 'anna Khālid-an 'arsal-a-hu 'ilā-hi muta' akkir-an, hādhā al-taqrīr-a, 'ilā al-mufattiš-i

upset-PFV.3MSG-me COMP Khalid-ACC send-PFV.3MSG-it to-him late-ACC this DEF-report-ACC to DEF-inspector-GEN

'It upset me that Khalid sent it to him late; this report, to the inspector.'

In this clause, both the embedded clause's object pronoun -hu and its goal pronoun -hi are marked within the clause. This structure indicates that both the embedded and the main clause refer to the same clause's pronouns. Again, no movement or extraction is necessary to understand the embedded clause.

The same diagnostics in Table 1 apply in the embedded domain as well. The embedded clause is complete before the final phrase(s) appear, and the grammatical relations within the clause are already represented by resumptive elements.

Table 2. Empirical profile of the Standard Arabic data

Example	Construction type	Clause complete before final XP?	Resumption present?	Number of right-peripheral XPs	Best analysis
(1a)	Ordinary VSO	No	No	0	Clause-internal postverbal subject
(1b)	Single afterthought subject	Yes	Agreement only	1	Clause-external afterthought
(2a)	Canonical transitive clause	No	No	0	Clause-internal object
(2b)	Single object afterthought	Yes	Yes	1	Clause-external afterthought
(3a)	Canonical transitive clause	No	No	0	Clause-internal object + goal
(3b)	Multiple afterthought package	Yes	Yes	2	Post-clausal package
(4)	Embedded single afterthought	Yes	Yes	1	Clause-external afterthought
(5)	Embedded multiple afterthought	Yes	Yes	2	Post-clausal package
(6)	Subject-identifying afterthought	Yes	Yes	1	Clause-external identification
(7)	Multiple identifying afterthought	Yes	Yes	2	Post-clausal package

These results support the anti-iterative proposal for Japanese right-peripheral afterthought, but they also show a major difference between the two languages. In Standard Arabic, single right-peripheral afterthought clauses can already be understood without any appeal to

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extraction. This fact invalidates direct transfer of the Japanese linguistic argument into Standard Arabic.

5.5. Reconstruction-Like Effects and Discourse Identification

If the afterthought clauses in Japanese are derived through narrow movement, one would expect the type of reconstruction that is typical of such constructions in other languages. However, Standard Arabic's afterthought clauses instead exhibit the opposite tendencies. The final determiner phrases (DPs) in the clauses indicate the referent that is already encoded within the clauses themselves.

(6)

ẓanant-u 'anna-hā waṣal-at mubakkir-an, Maryam-u
think-PFV.1SG COMP-she arrive-PFV.3F.SG early-ACC Maryam-NOM
'I thought that she arrived early; Maryam.'

The embedded clause includes the pronoun *-hā*. The referent that the final phrase identifies is already encoded in the clause.

(7)

ẓanant-u 'anna-hā 'arsal-at-hu 'amsi, Maryam-u, hādhā al-taqrīr-a
think-PFV.1SG COMP-she send-PFV.3F.SG-it yesterday Maryam-NOM this DEF-
report-ACC
'I thought that she sent it yesterday; Maryam, this report.'

Similar to (6), the referent of the embedded clause is encoded with the pronouns *'arsal-at-hu* and *-hā*. Thus, the determination of the referent is not derived through movement but through resumption.

These examples are not the same as Japanese afterthought clauses. However, they do support the conclusion that afterthought clauses function primarily as post-clausal discourse identification.

5.6. Independent Support from Standard Arabic Topic Structures

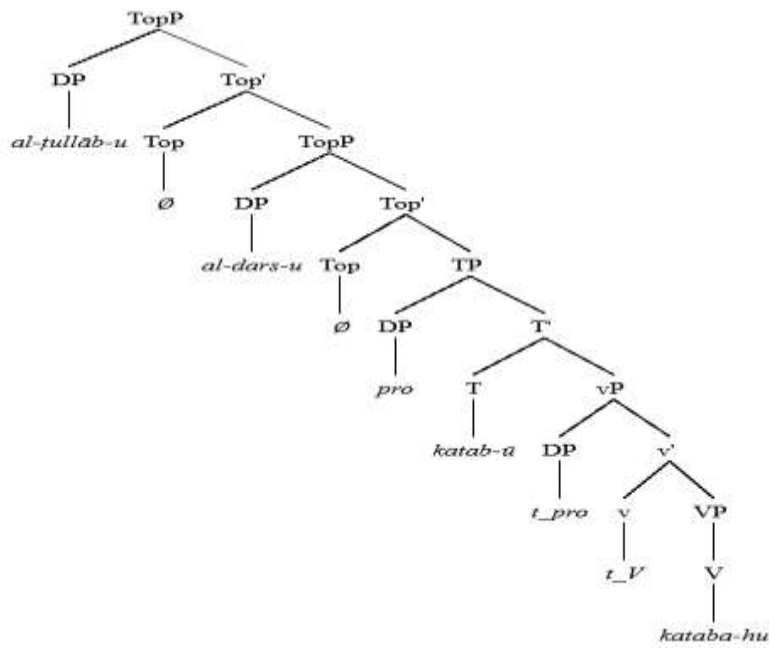
Standard Arabic's structure of topic and focus clauses also lends additional support to the argument that afterthought clauses are post-clausal discourse identification rather than derived from movement. Aoun et al. (2010) describe the differences between focus derived from movement and focus that results from Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD), whereas Alazzawie (2019) argues that topics in Standard Arabic are base-generated, resumed, recursive, and do not suffer from the same type of island effect as other clause elements. Right-peripheral afterthought in the examples cited in (2b) through (7) naturally exhibits the characteristics of resumptive edge elements rather than movement-derived focus elements. They do not contain the elements required to satisfy the argument structure of the clause; they are based on the insertion of resumptive elements, and their function is to identify the referents already within the clause (Aoun et al., 2010; Alazzawie, 2019).

Topic clauses that appear on the left edge of the clause also exhibit these same characteristics. A left-dislocation example makes the parallel visible:

(8)

al-ṭullāb-u, al-dars-u, katab-ū-hu
DEF-student.M.PL-NOM DEF-lesson-NOM write-PFV-3M.PL-it
'The students, the lesson, they wrote it.'

Figure 5. Resumptive topic chain in the Standard Arabic left periphery



While this structure is located on the left periphery of the clause, it is linked to the clause through resumption rather than movement. The existence of structures like this in Standard Arabic helps to show that it is theoretically natural to apply the same type of analysis to right-peripheral afterthought clauses.

While the right-peripheral afterthought clauses in Standard Arabic are not the same as topic clauses, this fact about the language still provides independent support for the view that Standard Arabic right-peripheral afterthought clauses are not derived through narrow movement operations. Instead, the language's post-clausal, discourse-linked structures support their analysis as a class of afterthought clauses.

5.7. Where the Japanese Proposal Works, Where It Must Be Modified, and Where It Fails

The Standard Arabic data now permit a direct comparative evaluation.

Table 3. Japanese proposal versus Standard Arabic results

Component of original proposal	Japanese analysis	Standard Arabic result	Evaluation
Ordinary postverbal material is a candidate for right dislocation	Yes, because postverbality is not baseline in the same way	No, because VSO is ordinary syntax	Requires modification
Single right dislocation is syntactic	Argued for	Not supported in clear resumptive Standard Arabic cases	Does not carry over directly
Multiple right dislocation is not iterative syntax	Argued for	Supported	Carries over
Multiple right dislocation is a PF/prosodic package	Argued for	Supported in refined form	Carries over with modification
Island/reconstruction diagnostics sharply separate single from multiple	Strong in Japanese	Weaker in Standard Arabic because resumption already removes extraction pressure	Partial support only

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Best generalization	Single = syntax, multiple = PF	Ordinary postverbal = syntax; afterthought (single/multiple) = interface phenomenon	Refined Standard Arabic hypothesis
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Where the Japanese Proposal Works

The Standard Arabic facts support the broader claim that apparent multiple rightward displacement need not be derived by repeated narrow-syntactic movement. In examples such as (3b) and (5), the clause is complete before the right-peripheral material appears, and the final strings behave like one discourse-linked package rather than several independently displaced syntactic arguments. In this respect, the anti-iterative core of Agbayani and Ishii's proposal transfers successfully.

Where the Proposal Requires Modification

The proposal must be reformulated because Standard Arabic does not provide the same baseline contrast as Japanese. Postverbality itself is not exceptional in Standard Arabic, and even single right-peripheral afterthought is most naturally analyzed through resumption and clause completeness. The relevant comparison is therefore not 'single versus multiple right dislocation,' but rather 'ordinary postverbal syntax versus clause-external afterthought.' That is the principal modification required by the Standard Arabic data.

Where the Original Proposal Fails to Carry Over Directly

The strongest version of the Japanese proposal does not transfer because Standard Arabic does not support a derivational partition in which single right dislocation is narrow syntax while only multiple right dislocation is prosodic. In Standard Arabic, the clearest single right-peripheral cases are already best analyzed outside narrow syntax. The language therefore supports a weaker but still theoretically significant conclusion: right-peripheral afterthought as a class is better analyzed at the syntax-PF interface, while ordinary VSO order remains clause-internal syntax.

Table 4. Competing analyses for the Standard Arabic right periphery

Construction	Clause-internal postverbal analysis	Iterative rightward movement analysis	Preferred afterthought/PF analysis	Outcome
(1a) VSO subject	Straightforward	Unnecessary	Unnecessary	Clause-internal syntax
(1b) Subject afterthought	Poor fit, because clause already complete	Unnecessary	Strong fit	Afterthought
(2b) Single object afterthought	Poor fit, because object slot already filled by clitic	Costly	Strong fit	Afterthought
(3b) Multiple right-peripheral XPs	Poor fit, because clause already complete	Highly costly	Strong fit	PF/discourse package
(4) Embedded single afterthought	Poor fit	Costly	Strong fit	Afterthought
(5) Embedded multiple afterthought	Poor fit	Highly costly	Strong fit	PF/discourse package

(6)-(7) Reconstruction- like cases	Poor fit	Predicts stronger reconstruction	Better fit	Afterthought identification
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5.8. Refined Standard Arabic Hypothesis

The Standard Arabic facts motivate the following narrower generalization:

Standard Arabic Right-Periphery Hypothesis

In Standard Arabic, apparent multiple right-peripheral displacement is not derived by repeated narrow-syntactic rightward movement. Once ordinary VSO syntax is distinguished from clause-external afterthought, multiple right-peripheral strings are best analyzed as a single post-clausal discourse/prosodic package. Single right-peripheral afterthought is also best treated as non-extractive in the clearest resumptive cases.

This reformulation preserves the anti-iterative PF-oriented insight without forcing Standard Arabic into a single-versus-multiple derivational split for which the language provides no independent evidence.

6. Conclusion

Standard Arabic's support for the model is partial. While it supports the basic proposal of the Japanese model's rightward movement, it does not permit a direct translation of that model into Standard Arabic. The Japanese model correctly posits that the phenomenon of multiple rightward movement is prosodic in nature rather than syntactic. Standard Arabic both supports that insight regarding anti-iterative phenomena following ordinary postverbal order, yet it does not exhibit the same partitioning between single and multiple rightward movement as Japanese.

Standard Arabic's examples of right-peripheral afterthoughts are all clause-external, even with single phrases. Thus, the most accurate statement of Standard Arabic's position is that both single and multiple right-peripheral afterthoughts are discourse and phonological form (PF)-oriented phenomena, as opposed to the clause-internal syntax that governs ordinary VSO clauses.

Thus, while Standard Arabic does not support the proposal of a division between syntactic and PF processes for both single and multiple rightward movement, it does support the proposal that the examples of multiple rightward movement are not actually syntactic phenomena, but rather prosodic in nature. This leads to an analysis of the right periphery of clauses in Standard Arabic as phenomena that are discourse and phonological form oriented, rather than syntactically oriented.

7. References

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