

Control is not Restructuring: Evidence from Telugu

Empirical messiness: There is disagreement on whether Telugu (Dravidian) exhibits control whatsoever (Kissock 2014, Sundaresan 2014). I argue that Telugu *does* exhibit exhaustive subject control, but that some predicates that are control verbs in English are not so in Telugu¹.

- (1) Ravi_i [EC_{i,j} Hawaii-ki vell-aDaani-ki] plan ches-aa-Du
Ravi.NOM [EC Hawaii.OBL-DAT go-NMLZ.OBL-DAT] plan do-PST-3SG.M

Trans: ‘Ravi planned for (himself, someone else) to go to Hawaii.’

- (2) Ravi_i [EC_{i,*j} poga thaag-aDam] maanes-aa-Du
Ravi.NOM [EC smoke drink-NMLZ.ACC] quit-PST-3SG.M

Trans: ‘Ravi quit smoking.’

Main Claim: One thread of syntactic analyses of control (Wurmbrand 1998, Cinque 2004, Grano 2015) attributes (the lack of) control properties to differences in complement clause size, i.e., *restructuring*. I argue that **the control/non-control distinction in Telugu does not correlate with clause size**, especially in the way that Grano (2015) demonstrates for Modern Greek and predicts should extend universally.

Null Hypothesis: For Grano, exhaustive control sentences are monoclausal, while partial control sentences are biclausal. While partial control does not exist in Telugu, a natural extension of Grano’s prediction for Telugu would be that exhaustive control sentences are monoclausal while non-control sentences with non-finite complements (just like sentences with finite complements) are biclausal. Thus, non-control sentences should pattern with finite-complement sentences respect to clausality diagnostics, while exhaustive control sentences should pattern differently. As the following three tests show, this is not borne out at all.

Test 1: NPI licensing: NPI licensing in Telugu is clause-bound.

- (3) **Wh-words as NPIs**
vaaDi-ni evaru chuuDa-ledu
3SG.M.OBL-ACC who.NOM do-PST.NEG
‘Who didn’t see him?/No one saw him.’
- (4) **Wh-subjects of embedded finite clauses cannot be NPIs**
[pani evaru ches-aa-Du ani] Ramesh cheppa-ledu.
[work.ACC who.NOM do-PST-3SG.M that] Ramesh.NOM say-PST.NEG
‘Ramesh did not say who did the work/*Ramesh did not say anyone did the work.’

However, gerund (non-finite) complements are always transparent to NPI licensing, regardless of control:

- (5) **Gerund complements of exhaustive control verbs are transparent to NPI licensing**
nenu [EC deen-ni tin-aDam] maaneyya-ledu
1SG.NOM [EC anything.OBL-ACC eat-NMLZ.ACC] quit-PST.NEG
‘I didn’t quit eating anything.’
- (6) **Gerund complements of non-control verbs are transparent to NPI licensing**
nenu [EC evari-ni koTT-aDaani-ki] plan cheyya-ledu
1SG.NOM [EC anyone.OBL-ACC hit-NMLZ.OBL-DAT] plan do-PST.NEG
‘I didn’t plan to hit anyone.’

Test 2: Inverse scope readings A quantifier embedded within a finite clause cannot take scope over a matrix subject quantifier:

- (7) **Inverse scope in Telugu**
oka manishi prati inTi-mundu unn-aa-Du
a man.NOM every/each house.OBL-in.front be-NONPST-3SG.M
‘A man is in front of every house’ $\exists > \forall / \forall > \exists$
- (8) **IS readings are blocked by finite clause boundaries**
oka manishi [prati inTi-mundu unn-aa-Du ani] chepp-aa-Du
a man.NOM [every/each house.OBL-in.front be-NONPST-3SG.M that] say-PST-3SG.M
‘A man said he was in front of every house.’ $\exists > \forall / * \forall > \exists$

Inverse scope is also blocked when one of the quantified elements is embedded within a gerund complement, regardless of control:

¹Double vowels denote length, and capital letters denote retroflex consonants.

(9) **Inverse scope readings are blocked across controlled clause boundaries**

O manishi [EC prati inTi-mundu nilabaD-aDam] maanes-aa-Du
 a man.NOM [EC every house.OBL-in.front stand-NMLZ.ACC] quit-PST-3SG.M
 ‘A man quit standing in front of every house.’ $\exists > \forall / * \forall > \exists$

(10) **IS readings blocked across non-controlled clause boundaries**

O manishi [EC prati inTi-mundu nilabaD-aDaani-ki] plan ches-aa-Du
 a man.NOM [EC every house.OBL-in.front stand-NMLZ.OBL-DAT] plan do-PST-3SG.M
 ‘A man planned to stand in front of every house.’ $\exists > \forall / * \forall > \exists$

Test 3: Scrambling Scrambling in Telugu is clause-bound:

- (11) a. Rajesh [Sreekar annam tin-Taa-Du ani] chepp-aa-Du
 Rajesh.NOM [Sreekar.NOM rice.ACC eat-FUT/HAB-3SG.M that] see-PST-3SG.M
 ‘Rajesh said that Sreekar will eat rice.’
 b. *Rajesh [Sreekar tin-Taa-Du ani] annam chepp-aa-Du
 Rajesh.NOM [Sreekar.NOM eat-FUT/HAB-3SG.M that] say-PST-3SG.M

Attempted: ‘Rajesh said that Sreekar will eat rice.’

Scrambling is impossible out of a gerund, regardless of control:

(12) **No scrambling out of a non-controlled gerund**

- a. Aarush-ku [annam ekkuva tin-aDam] avasaramu
 Aarush.OBL-DAT [rice.ACC more eat-NMLZ.NOM] need
 ‘Aarush needs to eat more rice.’
 b. *Aarush-ku [ekkuva tin-aDam] annam avasaramu
 Aarush.OBL-DAT [more eat-NMLZ.NOM] rice.ACC need
 ‘Aarush needs to eat more rice.’

(13) **No scrambling out of a controlled gerund**

- a. Ravi [EC annam tin-aDam] modalubeTT-aa-Du
 Ravi.NOM [EC rice.ACC eat-NMLZ.ACC] begin-PST-3SG.M
 ‘Ravi began to eat rice.’
 b. *Ravi [EC tin-aDam] annam modalubeTT-aa-Du
 Ravi.NOM [EC eat-NMLZ.ACC] rice.ACC begin-PST-3SG.M

Attempted: ‘Ravi began to eat rice.’

To summarize, three phenomena which show a difference in acceptability in clearly monoclausal vs biclausal sentences all fail to distinguish between control and non-control sentences with non-finite complements. This strongly suggests that there is no clausality difference between control and non-control sentences in Telugu - they are either both monoclausal or both biclausal (though it is unclear which one of those options is correct).

Conclusions: I have shown that while there exists an exhaustive control/non-control distinction in Telugu sentences whose complements are gerunds, that distinction does not correlate with relative clause size in the way that proponents of the control-as-restructuring hypothesis might expect.

While the restructuring analysis may be correct for the languages that Wurmbrand, Cinque, and Grano consider, the Telugu data cast into doubt whether such an analysis is viable more widely. It may be the case, then, that different languages grammaticalize control differently - a language like Modern Greek may use restructuring, while a language like Russian uses Agree (Landau 2008).

In some languages, control may even be purely semantic - see Jackendoff & Culicover (2003) for some thoughts on how such a hypothesis could be structured. It is unclear as of now which of these categories Telugu may fit into - future work will help to disambiguate this, as well as to continue to evaluate these competing theories, among others.

References: Kissock 2014 *NLLT* 32:1. Sundaresan 2014 *NLLT* 32:1. Wurmbrand 1998 MIT diss. Cinque 2004 in Belletti (ed.) *Structures and Beyond*. Grano 2015 - *Control and Restructuring*. Landau 2008 *NLLT* 26. Jackendoff & Culicover 2003 *Language* 79:3.