Crossed Control in Indonesian and Malagasy

The Indonesian verbs *mau* and *ingin* 'want' look like typical control verbs, (1a,b1). When they are followed by a passive predicate, however, an additional, unexpected interpretation arises, (1b2) (Sneddon 1996:271, Arka 2000:16, Musgrave 2001:146). The wanter is not the surface subject of 'want' but an oblique element in the complement clause. The surface subject is the theme of the embedded predicate and not an argument of 'want' at all.

- (1) a. mereka mau membunuh raja ini they want kill king this 'They want to kill the king.'
- b. raja ini mau di-bunuh (oleh) mereka king this want PASSIVE-kill by them
- b1. 'The king wants to be killed by them.'
- b2. 'They want to kill the king.'

We will call the sentence in b and its interpretation in b2, the CROSSED CONTROL construction. This paper shows that it largely has structural characteristics typical of control despite the unusual alignment between thematic roles and syntactic positions.

There are at least three characteristics of crossed control that make it look like an ordinary control construction: 1) The matrix predicate 'want' is thematic and has an experiencer argument, 2) the construction has SVX syntax, and 3) the construction is bi-clausal.

Because the crossed use of 'want' is a thematic verb with an experiencer argument, a non-volitional passive oblique such as *api* 'fire' in (2) results in anomaly. This and other evidence indicates the crossed use of 'want' is not an auxiliary/raising verb.

(2) #Kota ini ingin di-hancurkan oleh api town this want PASS-destroy by fire '#Fire wants to destroy this town.'

It is nevertheless clear that the theme of the embedded verb (*raja ini* 'the king' in (1b2)) is the subject of 'want'. It passes well-known subjecthood tests (Chung 1976), including clefting, (3). Lastly, there is evidence for a bi-clausal syntax. Negation can occur on either verb (examples not shown for lack of space) suggesting that there are two clauses.

bagian kalimat ini yang mau di-tegaskan guru this.part.of.the.sentence FOCUS want PASS-emphasize teacher 'It's this part of the sentence that the teacher wants to emphasize.'

Our main conclusion is that the crossed control construction has the syntax of an ordinary control structure. The outstanding question is how and why the thematic roles of 'want' and the embedded passive verb are mapped to the syntax in such an unusual way.

We compare the Indonesian cross control structure with a parallel construction in the VOS Austronesian language Malagasy, (4). Polinsky and Potsdam 2003 show that the Malagasy construction has the same structural and interpretive properties documented for Indonesian. We will show that it has additional restrictions that do not hold in Indonesian however.

(4) te hovidin- dRabe ny trano Malagasy want buy.PASSIVE- Rabe the house 'Rabe wants to buy the house.'

'#The house wants to be bought by Rabe.'

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