

# Control in Malayalam

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*Malayalam (mal), Dravidian*  
also known as *Alealum, Malayalani, Malayali, Malean, Maliyad, Mallealle, Mopla*  
spoken in *India (Asia)*

## 1 Grammar Profile

### 1.1 Morpho-Syntax

#### 1.1.1 Head position

head-final (postpositions, RelN)

#### 1.1.2 Morphological type

primarily agglutinating

#### 1.1.3 Case system

nominative/accusative. case markers are bound suffixes concatenated onto the head of the noun phrase: nominative (-Ø), accusative (-e), dative (-kk./-(n).), sociative (-oo.), locative (il), instrumental (-aal), genitive (-u.e/-re).

#### 1.1.4 Verbal Agreement

suffixes containing number, gender and person are concatenated onto the verb

#### 1.1.5 Null Arguments

null subjects/objects are permitted, pro, PRO

### 1.2 Matrix Clause

#### 1.2.1 Basic word order

SOV is unmarked, however, word order is relatively free

### 1.2.2 Alternate word orders

word order is relatively free; the only restrictions seem to be that in subordinate clauses, the noun follows its adjectival modifier and the embedded verb is always clause-final in both noun and adverb clauses.

### 1.2.3 Ordering of nominal and pronominal arguments

SO/OS; same order of nominal arguments.

## 1.3 *Embedded Clause*

### 1.3.1 Basic word order

verb-final

### 1.3.2 Verbal agreement

Embedded infinitival does not show subject agreement.

### 1.3.3 Possible morphological categories of the embedded clause

infinitive: -uwaan (Jayaseelan argues that there are two –uwaan verbal suffixes, one where the subject is non-case governed (to-infinitive) and one where the subject is optionally case governed (-for-to infinitive).) continuous/imperfective: -uka

## 2 **Control Profile**

### 2.1 *forward subject control into infinitival complement*

#### 2.1.1 Example structure

- (1) ñaani [PRO<sub>i</sub> ood-uwaan] sramiccu  
i-nom run-inf tried  
'I tried to run'
- (2) ñaani [PRO<sub>i</sub> nannaak-uwaan] aagrahiccu  
i-nom prosper-inf wished  
'I wished to prosper'
- (3) raamani [PRO<sub>i</sub> kañjaaw walikk-uwaan] istappedunnu  
raman-nom opium smoke-inf likes  
'raman likes to smoke opium'

#### 2.1.2 Predicates participating in the construction

implicative verb: sramicc 'try'

desiderative verb: aagrahicc 'wish' istamill 'like'

#### 2.1.3 Control type

Obligatory control. Disjoint subject in embedded clause requires gerund construction. (See below).

- (4) enikkøi [PRO<sub>i</sub> kañjaaw walikk-uwaan] istamilla  
i-dat opium smoke-inf like-neg  
'I don't like to smoke opium'
- (5) \*enikkøi [ente kuttikal kañjaaw walikk-uwaan] istamilla  
i-dat my children-nom opium smoke-inf like-neg  
'I don't like my children to smoke opium'

## 2.2 *forward subject control into gerund complement*

### 2.2.1 Predicates participating in the construction

desiderative verb: aagrahicc ‘wish’ istamill ‘like’

### 2.2.2 Control type

Non-obligatory control. Disjoint embedded subject allowed in gerund construction. (Cf above.)

- (6) enikkə [ente kuttikal kañjaaw walikk-unnat] istamilla  
i-dat my children-nom opium smoke-ger like-neg  
‘I don’t like my children smoking opium’

## 2.3 *subject control into sentential adjunct*

### 2.3.1 Example structure

Tense is not permitted on the adjunct, and agrees with the tense on the matrix verb. With -ə adjunct subject control seems to be obligatory.

- (7) ñaani oru maaj [Øi Øj potticc-ə] tinn-u  
i-nom one mango-acc pluck-ə eat-past  
‘I plucked a mango and ate it’

Also possible:

- (8) potticc-ə ñaan oru maa tinn-u  
‘I plucked a mango and ate it’

### 2.3.2 Predicates participating in the construction

affixes: -ə conjunction

-kondə present participle

-ittə past participle

-kkondirikke present participle

### 2.3.3 Evidence of structural position for unexpressed argument

Jayaseelan (1999) argues that the object control is not PRO but rather pro, while the subject control is PRO.

- (9) ñaani oru maaj [PROi proj potticc-ə] tinn-u  
i-nom one mango-acc pluck-ə eat-past  
‘I plucked a mango and ate it’

### 2.3.4 Control type

With kondə adjunct, subject control is obligatory

- (10) kutti karaññu-kondə skuulil pooyi  
child-nom cry-kondə school-in go-past  
‘crying, the child went to school’
- (11) \*amma karaññu-kondə kutti skuulil pooyi  
mother-nom cry-kondə child-nom school-in go-past  
‘the mother crying, the child went to school’

With -ittə adjunct, subject control is optional. There are examples without control.

- (12) kaññi kudicc-ittə kutti skuulil pooyi  
 rice porridge-nom drink-ittə child-nom school-in go-past  
 ‘having eaten rice porridge, the child went to school’
- (13) amma maricc-ittə awan karaññilla  
 mother-nom die-ittə he-nom cry-past-neg  
 ‘(his) mother having died (even), he didn’t cry’

Similarly with the kondirikke adjunct; subject control is optional.

- (14) udyaanatt-il ulaatti-kkondirikke, siita palatum aaloocicc-u  
 garden-in walk about-kkondirikke sita-nom many things-acc think-past  
 ‘while walking about the garden, sita thought about many things’
- (15) raaman udyaanatt-il ulaatti-kkondirikke, siita bhaksanam paakam ceyt-u  
 raman-nom garden-in walk about-kkondirikke sita-nom food-acc cooking do-past  
 ‘while raman was walking about in the garden, sita cooked food’

#### 2.4 *object control into sentential adjunct*

##### 2.4.1 Example structure

Object control also appears to be possible with the -kondə adjunct, although not obligatory. This would follow if Jayaseelan is correct in that object control is pro.

- (16) siita raaman-e tadawi-kkondə sakaaricc-u  
 sita-nom raman-acc fondle-kondə scold-past  
 ‘sita scolded raman, while fondling him’
- (17) siita raaman-e tadawai-kkondə krisnan-e sakaaricc-u  
 sita-nom rama-acc fonle-kondə krishnan-acc scold-pas  
 ‘sita scolded krishnan while fondling raman’

##### 2.4.2 Predicates participating in the construction

affixes:            -ə conjunction  
                       -kondə present participle  
                       -ittə past participle  
                       -kkondirikke present participle

##### 2.4.3 Control type

Object control also appears to be possible with the -ittə adjunct, although not obligatory.

- (18) nii paraññ-ittə, ellaawarum aa kaaryam ariññ-u  
 you-nom say-ittə everyone-nom that matter-acc know-past  
 ‘because you said it, everyone came to know about that matter’

Object control also appears to be possible with the -kondirikke adjunct, although not obligatory.

- (19) amma kulippiccu-kondirikke, kutti tummi  
 mother-nom bathe (trans.)-kondirikke child-nom sneeze-past  
 ‘while mother was bathing it, the child sneezed’

## **References**

Asher, RE and TC Kumari. (1997) Malayalam. New York: Routledge.

Jayaseelan, KA. (1999) Parametric studies in Malayalam syntax. New Delhi: Allied Publishers Lmtd.

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