# Did Vedic have anaphors? A closer look at *svá-*

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## 1 Introduction

Two issues[1]:

i. Sanskrit-internal problem: What are the locality conditions of possessive *svá-*? Is it

  – Topic oriented: Watkins (1976), Pinault (2001)
  – Rheme oriented: Vine (1997)
  – Agent oriented: Hock (2006)

  Kiparsky (2011): No structural antecedent necessary

ii. Different approaches to accounting for the properties of anaphora:

  – 'DP-based': Anaphors need to be locally anteceded by a DP binder in their governing category: Chomsky (1981), Huang (1982) etc.
  – Predicate-based: Reinhart and Reuland (1993), Reuland (2011) etc.
  – (Referential) hierarchy-based: DP antecedence still plays a role, but in addition referentially dependent nominals 'compete' for different domains, e.g. Burzio (1998), Kiparsky (2002), Safir (2004), Kiparsky (2011)

Concerning i., I will argue in this paper that *svá-* is a possessive anaphor that needs to be locally bound and that ii. its distribution can be predicted using the referential hierarchy of Sanskrit possessive pronominals.

### 1.1 Outline of this talk

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Background: Marking possession in the RV
- 3. Distribution of *svá-*: local antecedents

  – Subject orientation
  – Genitive possessors

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- 4. Dependency hierarchy for possessive pronominals in Sanskrit

  - LDA uses of *svá-*

- 5. Conclusion

NB all examples are taken from the Rigveda (unless otherwise indicated), collection of hymns composed ca. 1,400-1,200 BCE.

# 2 Strategies for marking possession in the Rigveda

## 2.1 Personal pronouns

- No designated 3$^{rd}$ person forms

(1)    Genitive paradigm of the personal pronoun

| 1.sg. | *máma* | ' my' | 1.du. | [*āváyos*] | 'of us two' | 1.pl. | *asmā́kam* | 'our' |
|-------|--------|-------|-------|------------|-------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 2.sg. | *táva* | 'your' | 2.du. | *yuvós* | 'of you two' | 2.pl. | *yuṣmā́kam* | 'your' |

- These can only be used when the antecedent is outside the clause - in GB terms, these must not be locally bound (Principle B)$^{2}$.

  (2)    a.    yádi  stómam    máma  śrávad        (8.1.15a)
              when song-ACC  my    hear-SUBJ.3SG
              'When he hears my song'
         b.    asmā́kam  śátrūn      ... darṣī́ṣṭa        (1.132.6)
              our       enemies-ACC  scatter-PREC.3SG
              'May he scatter our enemies!'

## 2.2 The demonstrative pronoun

In 'obviative' contexts (*$He_i$ saw $him_i$*), the genitive of the demonstrative pronoun stem is used for the third person: *asyá* (m.sg.), *asyā́s* (f.sg.), *ayós* (dual), *eṣám* (m.pl.), *āṣ́ám* (f.pl.).

(3)    na+átārīd                    asya        sámr̥tiṃ       vadhā́nāṃ    ... (1.32.6c)
       NEG+overcome-AOR.3SG DEM-3SGm onslaught-ACC weapons-GEN
       'He$_i$ has not withstood the onslaught of his$_{*i/j}$ weapons'

Again, Principle B.

## 2.3   *svá-* 'SELF's', 'own'

- Inflects like an adjective ('*svá-*' is the stem/citation form)

- Agrees in gender, number and case with the possessum

- Takes 1$^{st}$, 2$^{nd}$ and 3$^{rd}$ person antecedents:

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$^{2}$This also seems to hold for the correspondong clitics *me, te, naḥ, vaḥ*.

(4)    a.    svéna      bhā́mena      taviṣó      babhūván          (1.165.8)
            'svá-'-INSTR anger-INSTR powerful-NOM having.become-NOM.PF.PTCP

            'Having become powerful through my (own) anger, (I have killed Vṛtra) ...'

   b.    svā́ṃ      vavrím      kúha dhitsathaḥ      (1.46.9)
            'svá-'-ACC hull-ACC where place-2DU.SUBJ

            'Where do you want to place your (own) (bodily) hulls?'

   c.    svéneva      dhī́ro      mánasā      yad      ágrabhīt      (1.145.2)
            'svá-'-INSTR+CL wise-NOM mind-INSTR REL-ACC seize-3SG.AOR

            '... which he understood through his (own) mind like a wise (one).'

- The traditional view is that *svá-* suppletes the paradigm of the possessive pronoun for the third person, but this would not explain the cases in (4).

- Co-occurrence with a personal pronoun is furthermore possible:

(5)    yájasva             tanvàṃ      táva      svā́m      (6.11.2d)
       sacrifice-MID.IPV.2SG body-ACC your-2SG.GEN *svá*-ACC

*tanvàṃ táva svā́m* = 'your own body'? 'yourself'?
Grammaticalization 'body' → 'self' → (-)SELF - the right analysis here is probably 'sacrifice to your own self'

## 3    Distribution of *svá-*: Locality & antecedence

Kiparsky (2011): *svá-* doesn't need a structural antecedent.

### 3.1    Subject orientation

→ No.

(6)    mahé      pitré$_i$      dadātha      svā́ṃ$_i$      nápātam      (6,20,11)
       great-DAT father-DAT give-2SG.PF *svá*-ACC grandson-ACC
       'You have given the grandfather$_i$ his$_i$ grandson.'

Contrast this with cases that are traditionally considered subject-oriented:

(7)    a.    ra:m$_i$-ne      mohən$_j$-ko      us-ki$_{*i/j/k}$      kita:b di: (Hindi, Reuland 2011, 168)
            Ram-ERG Mohan-ACC 3GEN.FEM book   give-PAST.FEM

            'Ram$_i$ gave his$_{*i/j/k}$ book to Mohan$_j$

   b.    ra:m$_i$-ne      mohən$_j$-ko      əpn-i$_{i/*j/*k}$      kita:b di:
            Ram-ERG Mohan-ACC 3GEN.FEM book   give-PAST.FEM

            'Ram$_i$ gave his$_{i/*j/*k}$ book to Mohan$_j$'

(8)    Wo$_i$ gaosu Lisi$_j$ ziji$_{i/*j}$ de fenshu (Chinese, Huang and Tang 1991, 265)
       I     tell     Lisi     self     's grade
       'I told Lisi my own grade'

(9)    otec$_i$          synovi$_j$      dal sve$_{i/?j}$      auto (Czech)
       father-NOM son-DAT gave SELF-POSS car
       'The father$_i$ gave the son$_j$ his$_{i/?j}$ car'

### 3.1.1 Genitive constructions

... provide further arguments against subject orientation.
Hock (1991), Vine (1997): *svá-* often appears locally bound by a genitive antecedent:

(10)   ... sómāḥ    sutā́saḥ    santu    devasya své$_i$    kṣáye
        Soma-NOM pressed-NOM be-IPV.3PL god-GEN *svá*-LOC home-LOC
        sutapā́vnaḥ$_i$       (8,2,7)
        soma.drinker-GEN
        'Let the Somas of the god be pressed in the soma-drinkers$_i$ own$_i$ house.'

... a possible structure for (10):

(11)    a.   *[[sutapā́vnaḥ] [své kṣáye]]*
       b.
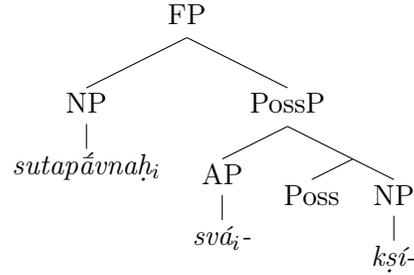


- Reuland (2011): Complementary distribution of POSS anaphors (Russian *svoj*, Icelandic *sinn* etc.) and non-clitic definite markers (definite articles etc.) - languages either have one or the other.

- Bošković (2008), (2009): Articleless languages lack DP.

→ Sanskrit: No article, POSS anaphor (*svá-*), allows Left Branch Extraction & extraction from NP adjuncts.

    .... could explain the contrast between languages in which structures like Engl. *He$_i$ saw his$_i$ book* are grammatical and those in which they aren't (i.e. Sanskrit, Russian), Burzio (to appear).

(12)    a.   On$_i$ uže    rasskazal mne o    [svoej$_i$/ *ego$_i$ žizni] (Russian, Timberlake 1979)
          he   already tell-PAST me   about self's/  *his  life
          'He$_i$ had already told me about his$_i$ life'
    b.   Ty$_i$ uže    rasskazal mne o    [svoej$_i$/ ?tvoej$_i$ žizni]
          you already tell    me   about self's/  your    life
          'You have already told me about your life'
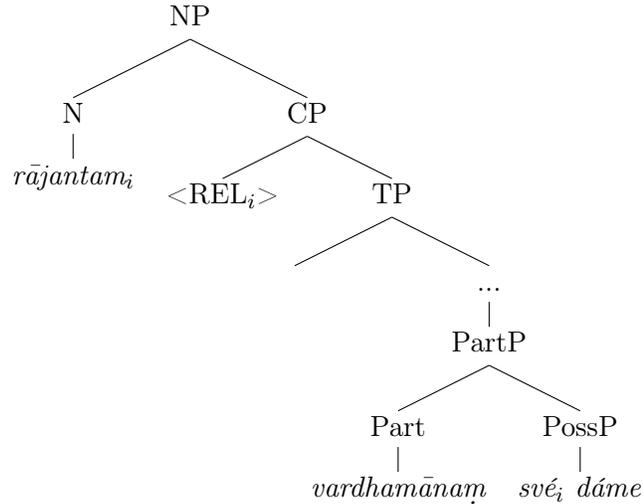
## 3.2 Participial constructions

Vine (1997): Relative clauses with a covert head - which antecedes *svá-*:

(13)    a.   1,1,7/8:
          emasi              rājantam$_i$ ... [REL$_i$ vardhamānaṃ     své$_i$
          approach-PRES.1PL ruler-ACC         growing.up-PTCP.ACC *svá*-LOC
          dáme]
          house-LOC

'We are approaching the ruler$_i$ (...) [REL$_i$ growing up [in his own$_i$ house]]'

b.



So once again the antecedence relation is local.

## 3.3 Summary

(14)    Distribution of *svá-* in the Rigveda:

| | |
|---|---|
| 'emphatic/intensifier' | 13 |
| substantivized | 4 |
| local antecedent | 86 |
| LDA | 12 |
| Unclear | 12 |
| Total | 127 |

With respect to binding domain D (see below):
- Pronouns (2.1.) must not have a coindexed antecedent in D
- *svá-* must have a coindexed antecedent in D - anaphor
- In obviative contexts, the demonstrative pronoun is used for the 3$^{rd}$ person

# 4   Dependency hierarchies

What are the binding domains for different referentially dependent items?
    Kiparsky (2002):

'hierarchy of constraints which impose successively more restrictive requirements on the locality relation between the anaphor and its antecedent. The domains form a strict hierarchy of inclusion ...'

(15)    locally bound » finite-bound » reflexive » ref. dependent » ref.independent

Similarly Safir (2004): Languages have different hierarchies of referential dependence. E.g. Germanic languages:

(16)    SIG-SELF »pronoun-SELF »SIG »pronoun »R-expression

(17)    **Form-to-Interpretation-Principle (FTIP)** (Safir 2004, 74):

$$\begin{array}{c} \alpha \\ \diagdown \\ X \quad \ldots \\ \quad \diagdown \\ \quad Y \quad \ldots \\ \quad | \\ \quad z \end{array}$$
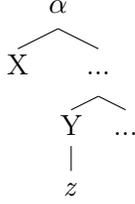
If there is a form $w$ that is more dependent than $z$ and we find $z$ in (17), then Y cannot be interpreted as identity dependent on X. → This principle gives us obviation

(18)    **Local Antecedent Licensing (LAL)**:
        what's left of principle A - 'an anaphor must be c-anteceded in Domain D'
        **Domain D**:
        'The domain for X is the minimal maximal extended projection containing X'

Compare the traditional notion of *governing category* (Huang 1982 version):

(19)    *Governing category*
        α is the governing category for β if and only if α is the minimal category containing β, a governor of β and a SUBJECT which, if β is an anaphor, is accessible to β.

## 4.1    A dependency hierarchy for Sanskrit possessive pronouns

(20)    *svá-* »personal pronoun »demonstrative pronoun »R-expression

If the possessum is *inalienably possessed* and the possessor is in the domain of LAL, no special possessive form is used.

(21)    kadā́ sūnúḥ    pitáram    … ichā̆c            (10,95,12a)
        When son-NOM father-ACC    search-SUBJ.3SG
        'When will the son look for the/his father?'

NB: This does NOT exclude kadā́ sūnúḥ **sváṃ** pitáram … ichā̆c - 'emphatic' use has special properties not directly governed by LAL! Compare

(22)    Czech:
        a.    zvedla            jsem ruku
              raise-PCTP.FEM am    hand-ACC
              'I raised my hand'
        b.    zvedla            jsem svoji        ruku
              raise-PCTP.FEM am    POSS-ACC hand-ACC
              'I raised MY hand'
        c.    *? zvedla            jsem moji        ruku
              raise-PCTP.FEM am    my-ACC hand-ACC

(23)    Kutchi Gujarati:

a. John e-no     (potha-no) hath-ne uparyo     (Patel-Grosz (2011))
John 3.sg-gen self-gen     arm-acc raised.pfv.m.sg

'John raised his (own) arm' (inalienable possession - *potha* optional)

b.  John e-no     *(potha-no) kutro    joyo
John  3.sg-gen self-gen     dog.m.sg see.pfv.m.sg

'John saw his own dog' (alienable possession - *potha* obligatory)

→ Patel-Grosz (2011): Possessive reflexives are sensitive to semantic conditions on binding ((in)alienability, animacy etc.)

### 4.1.1   *svá-*

If the possessum is not inalienably possessed and the possessor is in the domain of LAL, *svá-* is the most dependent form available:

(24)   a. té$_i$        jānata   svám$_i$    okyàṃ    ... (8.72.14a)
DEM-NOM.PL know-3PL *svá-*ACC home-ACC

'They$_i$ know their$_i$ home'

b. dúraś    ca víśvā   avṛnod     ápa sváḥ (3.31.21d)
doors-ACC and all-ACC close-IPF.3SG away *svá-*

'... and he unlocked all his doors.'

### 4.1.2   personal pronouns/3.sg. demonstrative

... since *svá-* is higher on the dependency scale than the personal pronoun, using it within the domain of LAL implies a dependent interpretation. Hence personal pronouns kick in for non-coreference:

(25)   yádi stómam  máma   (*svám)    śrávad       (8.1.15a)
when song-ACC my-ACC (**svá-*ACC) hear-SUBJ.3SG

'When he hears my song'

There are no designated 3[P]erson forms in the pronominal paradigm - hence we get the demonstrative in obviative contexts with two 3rd persons.

### 4.1.3   LDA/Discourse-anaphoric uses of *svá-*

Safir (2004): Anaphors can be promoted to UD ('Unbounded Dependency') forms under certain syntactic conditions - in which case they do not have to obey LAL.

(26)   English '-self' forms (from Safir 2004, 178):
a. Selena insisted that Charlie would trust no one except herself.
b. People such as myself have never been admitted.

Problem: Under what conditions can anaphors become exempt?

(27)   **táva** tviṣó      jániman rejata     dyaúr  éjad        bhū́mir
your splendor-GEN birth-LOC shake-IPF.3SG sky-NOM move-IPF.3SG earth-NOM

bhiyásā   **svásya** manyóḥ   (4.17.2)
fear-INSTR *svá-*GEN anger-GEN

'The sky was shaking [with fear] of your splendor at your birth, the earth moved out of fear of *your* anger.'

The second case also involves the phrase *bhiyásā svásya manyóḥ* - but with this reading *táva manyóḥ* is expected!

No syntactic antecedent:

(28)  nahí svám    ā́yuṣ     cikité         jáneṣu      (7.32.2)
      NEG *svá*-NOM lifespan-NOM know-PF.MID.3SG people-LOC
      'For one's own lifespan is not known among the humans'

Discourse antecedent:

(29)  yó$_i$  no abhí   hváro dadhé     svā́$_i$    tám$_i$      marmartu
      REL us PRVB trap   set-3SG.PRES *svá*-NOM DEM.PRON crush-3SG.IPV
      duchúnā        (2.23.6)
      mischief-NOM
      'Whoever sets a trap for us, may his$_i$ own mischief crush him!'

→ So in cases where the anaphor does not have a coreferential structural antecedent, LAL does not apply if the anaphor 'does not participate in a complete thematic complex' (p. 179)

→ This still cannot account for (29) and (28).

## 5   Conclusion

  i. In the majority of cases in the Rigveda, *svá*- has a local coreferent antecedent (in a domain that ≅ Safir's LAL)

  ii. Assuming a dependency hierarchy like (20) predicts the outcomes of competition between *svá*- and the personal pronouns (for 1$^{st}$ & 2$^{nd}$ person) on the one hand and *svá*- and the demonstrative pronoun on the other - *pragmatic obviation*

  iii. The possessive anaphor of Vedic patterns with POSS anaphors in other languages - especially interesting w.r.t. modern Indo-Aryan languages (Davison 2000)

  iv. No special domain for pronouns needs to be stipulated (no 'Principle B') - no [+/-PRON], [+/-ANAPHOR] features - FTIP + pragmatic obviation

  v. Anaphors can become 'exempt' from LAL - but the conditions need yet to be determined

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