Did Vedic have anaphors? A closer look at svá-

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1 Introduction

Two issues:

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 referen-
     tally 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 pronouns.

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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1I am grateful to Isabelle Charnavel, Amy Rose Deal, Hannes Fellner, Jim Huang, Sabine Iatridou, Jay Jasanoff
and Pritty Patel-Grosz for helpful comments and discussion.
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 3rd person forms

1. Genitive paradigm of the personal pronoun

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.sg.</td>
<td>máma</td>
<td>'my'</td>
<td>1.du.</td>
<td>[āváyos]</td>
<td>'of us two'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.pl.</td>
<td>asmákam</td>
<td>'our'</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.sg.</td>
<td>táva</td>
<td>'your'</td>
<td>2.du.</td>
<td>yuvós</td>
<td>'of you two'</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.pl.</td>
<td>yusmákam</td>
<td>'your'</td>
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- These can only be used when the antecedent is outside the clause - in GB terms, these must not be locally bound (Principle B).

2. a. yádi stómam máma śrávad (8.1.15a)

   when song-ACC my hear-SUBJ.3SG

   'When he hears my song'

b. asmákam śátrun ... dars̐īsta (1.132.6)

   our enemies-ACC scatter-PREC.3SG

   'May he scatter our enemies!'

2.2 The demonstrative pronoun

In 'obviative' contexts (*Hej saw himi), the genitive of the demonstrative pronoun stem is used for the third person: asyá (m.sg.), asyás (f.sg.), ayós (dual), eşám (m.pl.), ašām (f.pl.).

3. na+átārīd asya sámṛtīṃ vadhānām ... (1.32.6c)

   NEG+overcome-AOR.3SG DEM-3SGm onslaught-ACC weapons-GEN

   'Hej has not withstood the onslaught of hisśi/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 1st, 2nd and 3rd person antecedents:

2This also seems to hold for the corresponding clitics me, te, nah, vah.
(4) a. svéna bhámena taviśó babhuván (1.165.8)
   ‘śvá-’-INST anger-INST powerful-NOM having.become-NOM.PF.PTCP
   ‘Having become powerful through my (own) anger, (I have killed Vṛtra) ...’
   
b. svám vavruṁ kūha dhitsathah (1.46.9)
   ‘śvá-’-ACC hull-ACC where place-2DU.SUBJ
   ‘Where do you want to place your (own) (bodily) hulls?’
   
c. svéneva dhíro mánasa yad ágrabhít (1.145.2)
   ‘śvá-’-INST+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 tanvàm táva svám (6.11.2d)
sacrifice-MID.IPV.2SG body-ACC your-2SG.GEN svá-ACC

tanvàm táva svám = ‘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, dadátha svám i nápàtam (6,20,11)
great-DAT father-DAT give-2SG.PF svá-ACC grandson-ACC
   ‘You have given the grandfather his grandson.’

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

(7) a. rám-ne mohan-ko us-ki/si/j/k kita:b di: (Hindi, Reuland 2011, 168)
   Ram-ERG Mohan-ACC 3GEN.FEM book give-PAST.FEM
   ‘Ram gave his book to Mohan’
   
b. rám-ne mohan-ko āpn-i/si/j/k kita:b di:
   Ram-ERG Mohan-ACC 3GEN.FEM book give-PAST.FEM
   ‘Ram gave his book to Mohan’

(8) Woɪ gaosu Lisi j ziji/sj de fenshu (Chinese, Huang and Tang 1991, 265)
   I tell Lisi self’s grade
   ‘I told Lisi my own grade’

(9) otec, synovij dal svi/sj auto (Czech)
   father-NOM son-DAT gave SELF-POSS car
   ‘The father gave the son his 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 sutāsāḥ santu devasya svéi kṣāye
    Soma-NOM pressed-NOM be-IPV.3PL god-GEN svá-LOC home-LOC
    sutapāvnaḥi (8,2,7)
    soma.drinker-GEN
    ‘Let the Somas of the god be pressed in the soma-drinkersi owni house.’

... a possible structure for (10):

(11) a. [[sutapāvnaḥ/ [své kṣāye]]
    b. FP
        NP PossP
           sutapāvnaḥi AP Poss NP
                      svéi- kṣāye-

- 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. Hei saw hisi book are grammatical and those in which they aren’t (i.e. Sanskrit, Russian), Burzio (to appear).

(12) a. Oni uže rasskazal mne o [svoej/ *egoi žizni] (Russian, Timberlake 1979)
    he already tell-PAST me about self’s/ *his life
    ‘Hei had already told me about hisi life’
  b. Tyi uže rasskazal mne o [svoeji/ ?tvoeji 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 rājantamī ... [RELi vardhamānaṁ svéi
    approach-PRES.1PL ruler-ACC growing.up-PTCP.ACC svá-LOC
dāme] house-LOC
‘We are approaching the ruler; (...) [RELi growing up [in his owni house]]’

b. NP
   N
   rājantami
   CP
   <RELi>
   TP
   ...
   PartP
   PossP
   vardhamānāṁ
   svēi dáme

So once again the antecedence relation is local.

3.3 Summary

(14) Distribution of svā- 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
• svā- must have a coindexed antecedent in D - anaphor
• In obviative contexts, the demonstrative pronoun is used for the 3rd 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) \[ \text{SIG-SELF} \rightarrow \text{pronoun-SELF} \rightarrow \text{SIG} \rightarrow \text{pronoun} \rightarrow \text{R-expression} \]

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

\[
\begin{array}{c}
X \\
\downarrow \\
Y \\
\downarrow \\
z
\end{array}
\]

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 \( X \). \( \rightarrow \) 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**

\( \alpha \) is the governing category for \( \beta \) if and only if \( \alpha \) is the minimal category containing \( \beta \), a governor of \( \beta \) and a SUBJECT which, if \( \beta \) is an anaphor, is accessible to \( \beta \).

### 4.1 A dependency hierarchy for Sanskrit possessive pronouns

(20) \( \text{svá-} \rightarrow \text{personal pronoun} \rightarrow \text{demonstrative pronoun} \rightarrow \text{R-expression} \)

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

(21) \( \text{kadá sūnúḥ pitáraṇ} \ldots \text{ichāc} \) (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 \( \text{kadá sūnúḥ sváṃ} \text{pitáraṇ} \ldots \text{ichāc} \) - ‘emphatic’ use has special properties not directly governed by LAL! Compare

(22) **Czech:**

a. \( \text{zvedla} \quad \text{jem} \text{ru} \text{k} \)

\( \text{raise-PCTP.FEM} \text{ am} \text{ hand-ACC} \)

‘I raised my hand’

b. \( \text{zvedla} \quad \text{jem} \text{svoji} \text{ru} \text{k} \)

\( \text{raise-PCTP.FEM} \text{ am} \text{ POSS-ACC hand-ACC} \)

‘I raised MY hand’

c. *? \( \text{zvedla} \quad \text{jem} \text{moji} \text{ru} \text{k} \)

\( \text{raise-PCTP.FEM} \text{ am} \text{ my-ACC hand-ACC} \)

(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. téi jánata svámí okyám ... (8.72.14a)
    DEM-NOM.PL know-3PL svá-ACC home-ACC
    ‘They know their home’

b. dúraś ca vísvá avrñod ápa sváh (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) šrávad (8.1.15a)
    when song-ACC my-ACC (*svá-ACC) hear-SUBJ.3SG
    ‘When he hears my song’

There are no designated 3rd person 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 tviśó jániman rejata dyaúr éjad bhúmir
    your splendor-GEN birth-LOC shake-IPF.3SG sky-NOM move-IPF.3SG earth-NOM
    bhiyāsā svásya manyôh (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 manyóh - but with this reading táva manyóh is expected!

No syntactic antecedent:

(28) nahí svám áyuś cikité jánešu (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) yói no abhi hváro dadhē svá́i támǐ marmartu
    REL us PRVB trap set-3SG.PRES svá-NOM DEM.PRON crush-3SG.IPV
duchūnā (2.23.6)
    mischief-NOM
    ‘Whoever sets a trap for us, may hisi 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 1st & 2nd 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

References

Bošković, Željko. 2008. What will you have, DP or NP? In Proceedings of NELS 37.


