

EYSTEIN DAHL

Early Vedic

Morphosyntactic structures – Part 1: Verbal morphosyntax 1

Roadmap

- Basic syntactic features (case and agreement)
- Alignment, Differential Argument Marking
- Valency-changing categories

Basic syntactic features (case and agreement)

- Verbal arguments marked for case, and verb agreement with the subject argument

- Transitive verbs

tám *te* *gāvo* *nāra* *āpo*
this:ACC.SG you:DAT cow:NOM.PL man:NOM.PL water:NOM.PL

ádrir *índum̐* *sám* *ahyan* (RV VI 40.2)
stone:NOM.SG drop:ACC.SG PRV impel:AOR.3PL

- Intransitive verbs

agnír (...) *brahmā* *ní* *ṣīdati* (RV IV 9.4)
Agni:NOM.SG Brahman:NOM.SG down sit:PRS.3SG

Alignment – nominative-accusative pattern

- In the present/aorist/perfect/future system, Vedic shows consistent nominative-accusative alignment in case and agreement

<i>yáni</i>	<i>indrāgnī</i>	<i>cakrát^hur</i>	<i>vīryāṇi</i> (RV I 108.5)
REL.ACC.PL	Indra.and.Agni:VOC	do:PRF.2DU	deed:ACC.PL
<i>staviṣyāmi</i>	<i>tvám</i>	<i>ahám</i>	(RV I 44.5)
praise:FUT.1SG	you:ACC	I:NOM	

Alignment – non-nominative patterns

- In some parts of the verbal system, Vedic shows non-nominative alignment
- So-called passive aorist

sám *akāri* *sómaḥ* (RV VI 41.3)

PRV make:AOR.PASS.3SG soma:NOM.SG

á *agnír* *agāmi* (RV VI 16.19)

PRV Agni:NOM.SG come:AOR.PASS.3SG

Alignment – non-nominative patterns

- Resultative P-oriented verbal adjective in *-tá/ná-* (so-called past passive participle, PPP)

hatā *índrasya* *śátravaḥ* *sárve* (RV X 155.4)

slay:PPP.NOM.PL Indra:GEN enemy:NOM.PL all:NOM.PL

sárvaṃ *yád* *b^hūtám* (RV X 90.2)

everything:NOM.SG REL.NOM.SG become:PPP.NOM.SG

Differential Object Marking

- Accusative canonical case marker of direct object in Early Vedic
- Object alternation with some verbs

índra *sómaṃ* *píba* (RV I 15.1)
Indra:VOC soma:ACC.SG drink:PRS.IMP.2SG

sómasya *somapāḥ* *píba* (RV I 4.2)
soma:GEN.SG somadrinker:VOC.SG drink:PRS.IMP.2SG

Differential Object Marking

- On the other hand, some verb consistently select other case-marking patterns

dad^hikrāv[́]no

Dadhikrāvan:GEN.SG

akāriṣam

praise:AOR.1SG

(RV IV 39.6)

Differential Subject Marking

- In contrast, rather few examples of non-canonical subject marking in Vedic

stríyaṃ dṛṣṭvāya kitaváṃ tatāpa (RV X 34.11)
wife:ACC.SG see:ABS gambler:ACC.SG burn:PRF.3SG

ápāyy asya ánd^haso (RV II 19.1)
drink:AOR.PASS.3SG this:GEN juice:GEN.SG

ná mā taman (RV II 30.7)
not I:ACC be.exhausted:AOR.SBJ.3SG

Valency-changing categories/strategies

- Several valency-changing constructions in Early Vedic
- Valency-reducing and valency-increasing categories
- Inflectional as well as derivational morphology

Valency-reducing categories

- Middle voice sometimes appears to have a valency-reducing function
- Reflexive

urviyā *ví* *str̥ṇītām* (RV VII 17.1)
widely PRV spread:PRS.MID.IMP.2SG

- Anticausative/passive

índra *gr̥ṇīṣá* *u* *stuṣé* (RV VIII 65.5)
Indra:VOC invoke:PRS.MID.2SG and praise:PRS.MID.2SG

Valency-reducing categories

- Present passive in *-yá-* a relatively clear-cut case of a passive construction, restricted to two- and three-place predicates

imá *bráhmāṇy* *ṛcyante* *yuváb^hyām* (RV VII 70.6)
these:NOM prayer:NOM.PL sing:PRS.PASS.3PL you:DAT.DU

índur *índrāya* *d^hīyate* (RV IX 62.15)
drop:NOM.SG Indra:DAT place:PRS.PASS.3SG

Valency-reducing categories

- Agent of the present passive with instrumental case marking

uṣā *ucc^hántī* *rib^hyate*
Uṣas:NOM dawn:PRS.PTC.NOM praise:PRS.PASS.3SG
vásiṣṭ^haiḥ (RV VII 76,7)
Vasiṣṭha:INS.PL

Valency-reducing categories

- Resultative P-oriented verbal adjective in *-tá/ná-* defocusing or suppressing the agent of transitive predicates

sóma *á* *pítáye* *sutáh* (RV I 137.3)
soma:NOM.SG PRV drink:INF press:PPP.NOM.SG

- The so-called passive aorist has an analogous function

sám *akāri* *sómaḥ* (RV VI 41.3)
PRV make:AOR.PASS.3SG soma:NOM.SG

- Agent typically expressed by the instrumental or genitive

hatā *índreṇa* *pañayah* (RV X 108.4)
slay:PPP.NOM.PL Indra:INS Paṇi:NOM.PL

Valency-increasing categories

- The causative in *-(p)áya-* characteristically increases the valency of the underlying predicate

*párām (...)**parāvátam̐* *sapátnīm* *gamayāmasi* (RV X 175.4)

far:ACC distance:ACC cowife:ACC.SG come:PRS.CAUS.1PL

anyānyā *vatsám úpa d^hāpayete* (RV I 95.1)

one.after.other:NOM calf:ACC PRV suck:PRS.CAUS.3DU

बहवो धन्यवादाः
Thank you for your attention!