

GÖTZ KEYDANA

Early Vedic

Morphosyntactic structures – Part 3: Word Order, Embedding



Roadmap

- Basic word order
- Left and right periphery
- Speech acts
- Finite Embedding
- Infinite Embedding

Basic word order

- Vedic is head-final.
 - But: Dislocations are frequent, see below.
 - The basic word order in a sentence is SOV.

tám u te gávō nára ápo ádrir | índumṣám ahyān...

‘This drop have the cows, the men, the waters and the stone together impelled for you.’ RV 6.40.2

- On the fronted pronouns in this example see below

Postpositions

- Most primary adverbs also function as postpositions.

utá prá gāya ganá á niśádya

‘And sing forth having sat down among your troop.’ RV 6.40.1

- *prá* is a verbal particle
- *á* is a postposition
- *ní-* is again a verbal particle, but with univerbation

Noun phrases

- Modifiers precede their head

sámidd^he agnáu sutá indra sóma

á tvā vahantu hárayo váhiṣṭāḥ

‘By the kindled fire, by the pressed soma, o Indra, thereto let the fallow bays, the best conveyors, convey you.’ RV 6.40.3

- Only one genitive modifier per NP

...te dānāḥ ‘your gifts’ RV 8.64.9 vs. *dānám^ṃ vājasya* ‘gift of a prize’

RV 6.45.23

Hyperbaton

- NPs may be split

véṣi hí ad^hvarīyatām | upavaktā jánānām

‘You are willingly the Upavaktar of the people who perform a ceremony.’ RV 4.9.5

- P2 clitic(s) may break up a constituent

índrasya nú vīriyāṇi prá vocam

‘Now I shall proclaim the heroic deeds of Indra.’ RV 1.32.1

- Part of a constituent may be a P2 clitic

át^hā te yajñás tanúve váyo d^hāt

‘Then the sacrifice will create vitality for your body.’ RV 6.40.4

How do we know which order is basic?

- In the RV word order is flexible.
 - Metre has an undeniable influence on word order.
- But: In Vedic prose head-finality is the dominant pattern.
- Also: If we look at pairs of words which are swappable from the point of view of metrics, head-finality also prevails in the RV.

The left periphery

- Contains a discourse-functional slot

- Focus

asmākam joṣi ad^hvarām

‘Our ceremony enjoy!’ RV 4.9.7 (accented pers.pron.)

- Topic

tām u te gāvo... índum sám ahyān RV 6.40.2 (Soma is the topic of the preceding padas of the verse)

More on the left periphery

- Discourse-functional material precedes complementizer / relative or interrogative pronoun

índraḥ kím asya sak^hiyé cakāra

‘What did Indra make in its [sc. Soma’s] fellowship?’ RV 6.27.1

- Verb-fronting to C°

asmāṁ avantu te śatām | asmān sahasram ūtāyaḥ

‘Let your hundred, your thousand means of help help us.’ RV 4.31.10

- The boundary of the left periphery is the position of type 1 Wackernagel enclitics (on which see section 2.3)

The right periphery

- Amplified sentences (Gonda)
- Heavy? XPs following the verb

tám u te gāvo [...] índumṣ sám ahyan pītáye sám asmai

‘This drop have the cows [...] together impelled for you – for it to be fully drunk.’ RV 6.40.2

Questions

- Polar interrogatives
 - Optionally marked by *pluti*, see above section 2.3
- Constituent interrogatives
 - Interrogative pronouns fronted

kó ha kásminn asi śritáh

‘Who are you and fixed in what?’ RV 1.75.3

Performatives

- Present tense:

agním īḷe puróhitam

‘Agni do I invoke, the one placed to the fore.’ RV 1.1.1

- Aorist:

índrasya nú vīriyāṇi prá vocam RV 1.32.1

Finite embedding

- Relative clauses
 - Restricted: Head inside the relative clause, anaphoric pronoun in embedding clause

agnā yó mártiyo dúvo | dhíyam̐ jujóṣa dhītíbhīḥ | bhásan nú sá prá pūrviyá | íṣam̐ vurīta ávase

‘The mortal who has placed his friendship in Agni and has savoured insight through his thoughts, chewing he should now be the first to choose it as a refreshment, for help.’ RV 6.14.1
 - Non-restricted: Head outside the relative clause

índro yáḥ pūrbhíd āritáḥ

‘Indra, who is acknowledged as the stronghold-splitter’ RV 8.33.5

Finite embedding: Adjunction

- Typically, the slot in the embedding sentence corresponding with the embedded one is filled by an anaphoric element.
- Thus, the embedded sentence is not syntactically dominated.

yadā śṛtām kṛṇávo jātavedo | át^hem enam prá hiṇutāt pitṛb^hyaḥ

‘When you will have made him cooked, Jātavedas, then impel him forth to the forefathers.’ RV 10.16.1

Infinite embedding: Participles

- Participles formed from all TA-stems are a frequent means of embedding.

- Adnominal use

yásminn índraḥ pradívi vārd^hāná | óko dad^hé bramhmanyántaś ca náraḥ

‘[the soma pressing] at which Indra, having grown strong from of old, has found a home, as have the men who speak the sacred formulae.’ RV 2.19.1

- Converbial use (cf. root-compounds, section 3.1)

vīṣūco ásvān yuyujāná īyata

‘Having yoked the separated horses he speeds off.’ RV 6.59.5

More on participles

- Completive use

sómam manyate papivān yát sampiṃśānti óśad^him

‘A man thinks he has drunk soma when they crush the plant.’

RV 10.85.3

- Absolute locative (one sure example in the RV)

*índrāvaruṇa nū nú vāṃ | síśāsantīṣu d^hīśú á | asmáb^hyam śárma
yacc^hatam*

‘Indra and Varuṇa! Just now, as our insights are striving to win you,
extend shelter to us.’ RV 1.17.8

Infinite embedding: Infinitives

- Infinitives exhibit VP-syntax
- Their semantics is always modal (no Acl with verba dicendi)
- Infinitives are most frequently used as adjuncts.

- Rationale clause

sudevó adyá prapáted ánāvṛt | parāvátam paramám gántavā u

‘And if your lover should fly away today, without return, to go to the most distant distance...’ RV 10.95.14

- Purpose clause

tám te hinvanti tám u te mṛjanti | adhvaryavo vṛṣab^ha pátavā u

‘The Adhvaryus impel that to you, they groom that for you, o bull, to drink.’ RV 3.46.5

Infinitive complements

- Are generally still rare in the RV

vémi tvā pūṣan ṛñjāse

‘I want to rush to you, Pūṣan.’ RV 8.4.17

- Special type: Acl with *kar*

utó kavím purub^hujā yuvám ha | kṛpamāṇam akr̥ṇutam vicákṣe

‘And you, o you of many delights, made the lamenting poet see far.’

RV 1.116.14

Infinitives: further uses

- Predicative infinitive

nāiṣā gavyūtir apab^hartavā u

‘This pasture is not to be taken away.’ RV 10.14.2

- Imperative use

mád^he hótā duroṇé barhíṣo rā! | agnís todásya ródasī yájad^hyai

‘In the middle of the dwelling, as Hotar, ruler of the ritual grass, shall Agni sacrifice to the two world-halves.’ RV 6.12.1

Infinite embedding: The gerund

- Gerunds are converbs used under subject identity.
 - Anterior reading

sā no duhīyad yāvaseva gatvī | sahásrad^hārā páyasā mahī gáuh
‘She should yield her milk to us like a great cow with her milk in a thousand streams having gone to the pastures.’ RV 4.41.5
 - Simultaneous reading (one probable example in the RV)

apó vṛtvī rájaso bud^hnám áśayat
‘Obstructing the waters, he was lying on the foundation of the dusky realm.’ RV 1.52.6

Infinite embedding in prose texts

ŚB 7.1.2.1

*prajāpatiḥ prajā asṛjata | śa prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā sáravam ājím itvā vyàsraṃsata
tásmād vísrastāt prāṇó mad^hyatá údakrāmad át^hā 'smād vīryām
údakrāmat tásminn útkrānte 'padyata*

'Prajāpati produced creatures. After he had produced creatures and after he had run the entire race, he flagged. From him who was flagged, from his middle, breath expired. Then his manhood expired. When it had expired, he collapsed.'

बहवो धन्यवादाः
Thank you for your attention!