

Chapter 13

Reflexive constructions in Early Vedic

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This chapter addresses the diverse reflexive constructions and related functions found in Early Vedic, the earliest attested Indo-Aryan language of the Indo-European family. In particular, we analyze constructions with the middle voice, the nominal strategy *tanú-*, and the reflexive adjective *svá-*. Furthermore, we suggest different diachronic pathways that may explain the historical development of the system synchronically developed here.

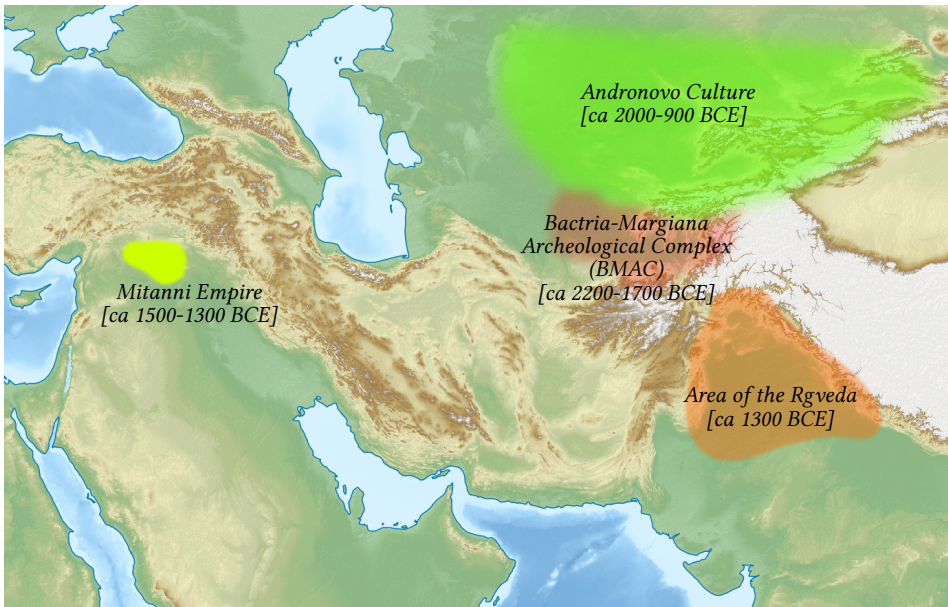
1 Introduction

1.1 Vedic and Early Vedic

Vedic (or Vedic Sanskrit) is the earliest attested Indo-Aryan language of the Indo-Iranian (or Indo-Iranic) branch of the Indo-European family. It was spoken from the mid-2nd millennium BCE through to the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE, within the area of today's Afghanistan, northern Pakistan and northern India (Witzel 2006: 160), see Figure 1.

Vedic is attested in the oldest religious texts of Hinduism and Sanskrit literature, the *Śaṃhitās* 'collections': *Ṛgveda-Śaṃhitā* (RV), *Sāmaveda-Śaṃhitā*, *Black* (*kṛṣṇa*) and *White* (*śukla*) *Yajurveda-Śaṃhitā* (YV), and *Atharvaveda-Śaṃhitā* (AV). The texts were composed for the ritual recitation of sacred poetic formulas (*mantrās*) with fixed metrical structures alongside parts in prose; they were memorized and verbally transmitted with astonishingly high fidelity by oral tradition across generations up to the present day, preserved in several recensions





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Figure 1: Geographical distribution of speakers of Early Vedic

or ‘schools’ (*śākhās* ‘branches’, e.g. AV of the *Paippalāda-Śākhā*). Their written fixation and canonization was subsequent to the ongoing process of their creation and continual re-arrangements within the oral transmission.

Given a timescale of roughly 1000 years, it is difficult to speak of a homogeneous language. Therefore, diverse labels are used to differentiate historical varieties: Early Vedic, Old Vedic, Late Vedic.¹ Early Vedic (henceforth, EV) is the language of the core of the *Rgveda-Saṃhitā*, especially the language of the “family books” (Maṇḍalas 2-7) and RV 1.51-191, 8.1-66 (Oldenberg 1909 [1912]), and presumably several parts of RV 9, which is a later compilation of hymns. Although it is not possible to date these phases with complete accuracy, the earliest sections (RV 5) may have been composed by people who spoke the language in everyday life around 1400 BCE (Witzel 1989: 124–127, Witzel 1997). The term “Late Early Vedic” refers to the language of RV 1.1-50, 8.67-103, and RV 10.

This is a corpus-based investigation and the focus of this paper is on the language of the RV, which most likely corresponds to the period in which Early

¹“Old Vedic” is the language of the Mantra period, subsequent to Early Vedic, and datable to ca. 1150 BC with the beginning of the Iron Age (Witzel 1997: 280). It is followed by “Late Vedic”.

Vedic was spoken. The topics that are covered in this paper are mapped following the general lines proposed by Janic & Haspelmath (2023 [this volume]). The structure of this paper is as follows: in the rest of this first section, we offer an overview of the language under investigation and some relevant remarks about its grammar. In §2, we analyze the diverse strategies for reflexive marking: verbal (§2.1), head noun (§2.2) and adjunct auto-possessive (§2.3). In each of these sections, we further offer an overview of the different values associated with those strategies. We express our conclusions in §3.

1.2 General remarks on Early Vedic grammar

Vedic has fusional morphotaxis with cumulative exponence of grammatical categories. The dominant marking strategy is suffixation; partial reduplication is frequent with verbs (e.g. perfect active *ca-cákṣ-^a* ‘[he/she/it] has seen [him/her/it]’, from $\sqrt{cakṣ-}$).² The fusional marking strategy includes portmanteau suffixes (“endings”) for person, number, TAM, voice (see below), or case, number, gender, e.g. [ACC.SG.F] *-am* of *vác-am* (Patient, Theme or Goal) from *vák* (*vác-*) ‘speech’. There is a high degree of stem variation, including root and stem suppletion (e.g. *purú-* [ADJ.M.PL] ‘much, many’ vs. *pūrví-* [ADJ.F], and root and/or stem ablaut with multiple morph variants (e.g. $\sqrt{han-}$ /*ghn-*/*ghan-*/*ghāṃ-*/*ja-* ‘to slay, kill’). Several diachronically innovative roots lack ablaut (e.g. 3SG Xth present indicative active *cakṣáyati* from *cakṣ-* ‘to see’). Verbs and pronouns may show root suppletion, the former depending on TAM, e.g. perfective *á-vadh-īt*, ($\sqrt{vadh-}$ ‘to slay, kill’) vs. imperfective *hán-ti* ($\sqrt{han-}$ ‘to slay, kill’); the latter depending on case, e.g. anaphoric pronouns *sá-s* [NOM.M] vs. *tá-m* [ACC.M].

Verbs inflect via endings that encode simultaneously person (1, 2, 3), number (SG, DU, PL), voice (active vs. middle), and TAM distinctions. Present tense is only coded by endings, e.g. [3SG.PRS.ACT] *-ti* of *hán-ti* ‘[he/she/it] is slaying [him/her/it/them]’ or middle *-te* of *jíghna-te*. Past tense is coded by the prefix *á-* combined with endings (e.g. *á-vadh-īt*, *á-han* ‘[he/she/it] slew, killed [him/her/it/them]’). Future tense is coded by a tense stem, e.g. *haniṣyá-^{t(i)}* ‘will slay, kill’, which is rare in Early Vedic, future tense being more often coded

²In §1, we follow the conventions of Vedic philology by giving the 3SG form of verbs as citation form, and by hyphenating the stem (e.g. *ca-cákṣ-*). The 3SG ending suffix is given as a superscript when not illustrative. The symbol $\sqrt{}$ is used to cite the root. The traditional category “present” is rather an imperfective aspect plus present tense. “Present stems” (that is, imperfective stems) are traditionally numbered from Ist through Xth. For the sake of space, examples are translated but left unglossed in this section. In general, we follow the Leipzig glossing rules (see the Abbreviations section at the end for gloss abbreviations). Morphs are not segmented unless absolutely necessary to follow the argumentation in the paper.

by the subjunctive-future stem. Coding of mood is by endings (e.g. indicative 3SG *hán-ti*, *jíghna-te*, imperative 2SG *ja-hí*, 3SG *hán-tu*) or by the use of modal stems, e.g. “subjunctive” *hána-t⁽ⁱ⁾* (exhibiting subjunctive-future polyfunctionality), optative *hanyá-t*, desiderative-conative *jíghāṃsa-ti*. There is an archaic non-tensed category called the “injunctive”, e.g. *hán* ‘[he/she/it] slew, slays, will slay [it/him/her/them]’, underspecified for tense and non-irrealis modal distinctions. Verbs inflect for aspect via varying stems, following a “root and pattern” stem formation principle (Pooth 2014: 113ff.): imperfective (traditionally called “present stem”) *hán-ti*, intensive I *jāṅghan-ti*, intensive II *ghānighn-ant-* (participle), perfective (traditionally called “aorist stem”) *á-vadh-it*, anterior (traditionally called “perfect stem”) *jaghān-a*.

Nouns and adjectives (e.g. *kṛṣṇa-* m. ‘blackbuck, *Antilope cervicapra*’, *kṛṣṇá-* adj. ‘black’) inflect for three genders (feminine, masculine, and neuter), three numbers (singular, dual, plural), and eight cases (nominative, accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative, genitive, locative, vocative). Nouns have lexical gender. Adjectives generally inflect like nouns but for all three genders.

Vedic alignment is of the nominative-accusative type. The nominative typically encodes A = S, while the accusative encodes P (patient), T (theme), G (goal), and even R (recipient); alternations of accusative G and R with dative and locative are not infrequent. The instrumental may express the oblique agent of passive constructions. Vedic lacks the valency relation of necessary complementation (Pooth 2014: 281–301); all arguments can be pragmatically non-overt and covert. Vedic word order is basically discourse-configurational. Noun phrases can be discontinuous.

2 Reflexivizers in Early Vedic

Early Vedic lacks a prototypical reflexive pronoun, but has diverse strategies for coreference of arguments within the minimal clause.³ Following the cross-linguistic classification of Faltz (1977), these are basically the middle voice and a head noun strategy featuring: *tanú-* ‘body’. There is also a complex strategy with the adpossessionive *svá-* (+ noun), used mostly for partial coreference. Early Vedic also has an elaborate system of personal pronouns (1st and 2nd person singular, dual, plural) and demonstrative pronouns (3rd person singular, dual, plu-

³To our knowledge, a thorough study on Vedic long-distance reflexives is still lacking. As in other ancient Indo-European languages, a dedicated long-distance reflexive is absent. It seems possible that the demonstrative pronoun *sá-* may be used in some cases. Further study on this topic is still needed.

ral), which when used in the genitive case (e.g. *māma* [1SG.GEN], *táva* [2SG.GEN]), encode both coreferential and disjoint possession.⁴

2.1 Verbal reflexivizers

2.1.1 General remarks on the Early Vedic middle voice and its polysemy

In EV, middle inflection is polyfunctional:⁵ following the terminology of Haspelmath (2023 [this volume]) its functions include autopathic (i.e. direct reflexive), as the first 3PL form in (1),⁶ autobenefactive, as in (2), autoreceptive/autodirected, as in (3), or auto-possessive (reflexive possessive), as in (4).⁷ The subject (mainly nominative) is either beneficiary, recipient/goal, or possessor:

- (1) *añjáte* *vy añjate* *sám añjate*
 anoint.3PL.PRS.MID RECP anoint.3PL.PRS.MID together anoint.3PL.PRS.MID
 ‘They anoint themselves, they anoint each other, together they anoint each other’ (RV 9.86.43a)
- (2) *yáje* *tám*
 worship.1SG.PRS.IND.MID DEM.ACC
 ‘I worship him for my benefit’ (RV 2.9.3c)
- (3) *á devó dade...* *vásūni*
 (t)hither god.NOM.SG give/take/receive.3SG.PF.IND.MID good.ACC.PL
 ‘The god has taken the goods to/for himself’ (RV 7.6.7a)
- (4) *úc chukrám átkam ajate*
 out bright.ACC.SG garment.ACC.SG drive.3SG.PRS.IND.MID
 ‘He pulls out his (own) bright garment’ (RV 1.95.7c)

With plural subjects, middle inflection can show corresponding reciprocal meanings: recipropathic (in the spirit of the “autopathic” term, coined by Haspelmath (2023 [this volume])), as illustrated by the second 3PL form in example

⁴There are also possessive pronominal adjectives (e.g. *māmaka*- ‘my’), but these are rare in Early Vedic (Macdonell 1910: 305).

⁵The high degree of polysemy and lability in EV middle forms strengthens the hypothesis that the Vedic middle more generally goes back to a Proto-Indo-European “off-valency-processing” detransitivizing category (Pooth 2014).

⁶All translations are our own, unless explicitly stated.

⁷We prefer the labels “recipropathic” and “auto-possessive”, as these terms show with greater accuracy that these are different functions and that they belong to a complex net of connected functions (autopathic, autobenefactive, recipro-possessive, etc.).

(1) (often with the particle *ví* as an additional marker; Kulikov 2007a), recipro-benefactive (‘for each other’s benefit’), recipro-receptive/amphi-directed (‘to each other’), recipro-possessive (‘each other’s ACC’). With plural subjects, middle inflection also encodes joint action (‘together with each other’), as in (5), often additionally encoded by the particle *sám* ‘together’:

- (5) *sám áyanta á díśaḥ*
 together go.3PL.PRS.IND/SUBJ.MID (t)hither direction.ACC.PL
 ‘They (will) go together in all directions’ (RV 1.119.2b)

Moreover, middle inflection can encode an indefinite Agent, as in (6), and can even have a passive function with an optional oblique Agent (normally in the instrumental case), as in (7).

- (6) *yáthā vidé*
 like know.3SG.PRS/PF.IND.MID
 ‘As (is) known’ (RV 1.127.4a)
- (7) *tvayá yát stavante... vīrās*
 2SG.INS when praise.3PL.PRS.IND/SUBJ.MID man.NOM.PL
 ‘When - by you (oblique agent) - the men are praised’ (RV 6.26.7c)

Middle inflection is often lexicalized with experiencer-stimulus verbs, verbs of sentience and cognition (e.g. *mányate* ‘to think something, think of someone’), emotive speech, motion, change in body posture, states (e.g. *áste* ‘to sit, sit down’). This conforms to a well-known middle marking pattern (Kemmer 1993).⁸ Lexicalized middle inflection allows *man-* ‘to think’ to be used in a predicative reflexive construction, as in (8):

- (8) *mánye revān iva*
 think.1SG.PRS.MID wealthy.NOM.SG as
 ‘I think of myself as a wealthy man’ (RV 8.48.6cd)

In a few cases, middle inflection indicates that the accusative is a non-affected goal, whereas corresponding active forms indicate that the accusative is an affected patient, e.g. middle *jīhīte* ‘to go away to someone [ACC], to give way to someone [ACC]’ vs. active *jāhāti* ‘to leave someone [ACC] behind’ (Pooth 2014:

⁸Middle inflection is also lexicalized with verbs indicating a lower degree of control, e.g. *pard-* ‘to fart’ (**párdate* is not attested in the earliest texts but can be reconstructed based on Classical Sanskrit *pardate*; see Pooth 2014).

154ff.). The distinction of active *yé tvāṃ ... pádyanti* ‘who are stepping forward to you’ (RVKhil 4.2.7a) vs. *pádyate, ápādi* ‘to fall down’ (*pad-*) seems to reflect an agentive active vs. non-agentive middle opposition.

When judged from its entire functional scope, the EV middle voice category is “off-valency-detransitivizing” (Pooth 2014). This implies that it is *not necessarily* a valency-changing category, and that *per se* middle inflection does not *categorically* decrease the number of participants involved in the event, but can do so, and does, if such an interaction between verb stem and middle inflection is lexicalized.

As illustrated in (9), middles (e.g. 3PL *áranta/aranta*) can show labile syntactic and semantic behavior. They are used intransitively (‘came together’) or convey *indirect causative* meaning (where *indirect causative* means causing a change of state in P without direct physical contact or manipulation).

- (9) a. *sám... vām uśánā áranta devāḥ*
 together 2DU.ACC uśánā.INS meet.3PL.AOR.MID god.NOM.PL
 ‘The gods made you two come together with Uśanā’ (RV 5.31.8d)
- b. *sám... aranta párvat*
 together meet.3PL.AOR.MID limb.NOM.PL
 ‘The limbs came together’ (RV 4.19.9d)

In (9a), the gods (*devāḥ*) cause a change of state in the 2DU, whereas the meaning of (9b) does not include causation (‘the limbs’ undergo a change of state). Active forms can also exhibit transitive/intransitive lability or similar kinds of polysemy, as in (10).

- (10) *táva bhāgasya tṛṇuḥi*
 you.GEN.SG portion.GEN.SG sate.oneself/become.sated.2SG.IMP.ACT
 ‘Sate yourself/be/become sated from your portion!’ (RV 2.36.4cd)

The verb *tṛṇ-/tarp-* is stative-processual ‘to be/become sated’ but also allows an agentive reflexive meaning ‘to sate oneself, make oneself be saturated’.⁹

Thus, not all TAM stems and active vs. middle forms are equally specified for valency in EV. Transitive/intransitive lability vs. non-lability is licensed by a lexicalized interaction between the lexical meaning and the meaning of the

⁹The stem formation pattern with thematic PRS *tṛṇpá-*, thematic AOR *átṛpa-*, PF.MID *tātṛpur*, participle *tātṛpānā-* points to a preceding deponent verb (“proto-middle tantum”; Pooth 2014), as also indicated by the “middle-ish” polysemous semantics. The active-*nu*-present forms seem to be innovative.

respective TAM stem formation vis-à-vis active vs. middle inflection (Pooth 2014). Consequently, the valency-decreasing function of middle inflection operates as a *lexicalized interaction* with TAM stems specified for valency, e.g. “present passive” stems like *pūyá-te* ‘is purified’ vs. active IXth “present” *punāti* ‘purifies someone [ACC]’ (Kulikov 2012; Pooth 2014).¹⁰ Various works have described typical labiality introduced by special TAM formations, e.g. that of perfect active forms (Kümmel 2000), athematic middle *-āna-* participles, etc. (Kulikov 2014).

2.1.2 Verbal reflexive constructions in the autopathic domain

Autopathic reflexives set the coreference between subject and object. Such cases can be expressed by the middle voice in all kinds of clauses, and both with extroverted, as was seen in (1) above and also in (11a) below, and introverted events, as in (11b), according to Haiman’s (1983) terminology:

- (11) a. *prché* *tád* *éno* *varuṇa*
ask.1SG.IND.MID DEM.ACC.N sin.ACC.N Varuṇa.VOC
‘I ask myself about that sin, o Varuṇa’ (RV 7.86.3a)
- b. *uṣāmāṇaḥ* *úrṇām*
clothe.PTCP.MID.NOM.SG wool.ACC.SG
‘Clothing himself in wool’ or ‘Being clothed/dressed in wool’ (RV 4.22.2c)

In autopathic reflexive constructions, the middle voice is an almost obligatory marking that can co-occur with the nominal strategy, as shown below in §2.2. There is a tendency to use middle inflection as a reflexivizing strategy without additional marking when a corresponding transitive active form exists, as is the case for the verb in (12), while otherwise the additional nominal marking strategy can be used.

¹⁰ A diachronic tendency to introduce the valency-changing function by narrowing active or middle forms of formerly labile verbs to either transitive or intransitive function is evident from the relation of active forms of archaic stems of motion verbs (e.g. ¹*r* ‘to rise, raise’) to corresponding active forms of innovative stems (Pooth 2012). The restriction of transitive valency to active forms of innovative present stems is also evident from active forms like *pīnva-ti* vs. middle forms *pīnva-te* of the verb *pīnv-* ‘to swell’. Whereas active forms of the Ist present stem *pīnva-* are restricted to transitive function (‘to swell someone’), corresponding middle forms are more dominantly intransitive (‘to swell’), although there are a few relics with indirect causative meaning. The narrowing of several middle forms to valency-decreasing function and the restriction of TAM stems to either transitive or intransitive valency is an ongoing innovative functional change within the EV language (Pooth 2014).

- (12) *táva śriyé marútaḥ marjayanta*
 you.GEN.SG splendour.DAT.SG marut.NOM.PL scrub.3PL.CAUS.MID
 ‘For your splendour, the Maruts scrubbed themselves’ (RV 5.3.3a)

As for introverted events, the EV verb stem *vás-^{te}* is restricted to middle inflection, while the causative stem *vāsáya-^{ti}* can be active and transitive ‘to clothe someone (A acting on P)’. As illustrated in (11b), the middle participle *uśámāṇa-* can be interpreted as the nucleus of a two-place structure with a P subject [NOM] and a theme [ACC], but it can also have a stative interpretation (‘is dressed/-clothed’). Thus, *váste* shows stative-dynamic polysemy ‘to be clothed in [ACC], to clothe oneself in [ACC]’. The reason why the autopathic reflexive reading in (11b) does not co-occur with a nominal strategy may be that *váste* is already a special “introverted verb stem” in EV.

2.2 Head noun reflexivizers

2.2.1 General remarks on *tanú-*

The feminine noun *tanú-* ‘body, person, self’ can be used in direct (in the accusative case) and indirect (in an oblique case) reflexive constructions, with an animate (and highly agentive) antecedent, as in (13):

- (13) *ágne yájasva tanvām táva svām*
 agni.VOC worship.2SG.IMP.MID self.ACC.SG your.SG own.ACC.SG
 ‘Agni, worship yourself’ (RV 6.11.2d)

However, *tanú-* is not a dedicated reflexivizer without lexical meaning, because it is not wholly grammaticalized as a reflexive marker (Pinault 2001; Orqueda 2019).¹¹ While many cases are ambiguous between a lexical and a reflexive interpretation, others display only a lexical interpretation, as the comparison between (14a) and (14b) shows:

- (14) a. *súraḥ upāké tanvām dádhānaḥ*
 sun.GEN.SG in.front.LOC.SG body/self.ACC.SG put.PRS.PTCP.MID.NOM.SG
 ‘Placing your body/yourself in front of the sun’ (RV 4.16.14a)
 b. *ásmā bhavatu naḥ tanúḥ*
 rock.NOM.SG be/become.3SG.IMP.ACT we.GEN.PL body.NOM.SG
 ‘Let our body be/become a rock’ (RV 6.75.12b)

¹¹The use of *tanú-* as a reflexivizer in Early Vedic illustrates a well-known cross-linguistic development of reflexives from body-nouns and body-part nouns, as shown by Schladt (2000), among others.

In ambiguous cases like (14a), only the context may help to disambiguate the polysemy (Pinault 2001; Kulikov 2007b). Both as a reflexivizer and as a lexical item, *tanú́-* is far more frequent in the singular, although there are also some plurals and a few duals. Besides, as expected, the accusative case is most frequent, although there are also cases of coreference in the oblique domain, as in (18) below.

2.2.2 Head noun reflexive constructions with *tanú́-*

As shown in §2.1, the middle voice is the primary reflexivizer in EV, so *tanú́-* is mostly used as an additional mark of reflexivity to emphasize the reflexive interpretation, and this explains why practically all reflexive constructions with *tanú́-* are also marked with the middle voice. However, there are no examples of *tanú́-* with middle-marked and typically introverted events (e.g. *vas-* ‘to be clothed, clothe’). Besides, not all extroverted reflexives allow the addition of *tanú́-*.

The reflexive strategy with *tanú́-* can operate for all three persons and all three genders. The singular accusative with a singular referent is the most frequent structure, although it is also possible to find both a plural reflexivizer with a plural referent, as in (15) below, and a singular reflexivizer with a plural referent.

- (15) *yátra śúrāsaḥ tanvāḥ vitanvaté*
 where brave.NOM.PL body/self.ACC.PL stretch.MID.PRS.3PL
 ‘Where the brave ones/heroes stretch their bodies/themselves’ (RV
 6.46.12a)

The rarer cases of non-agreement are always ambiguous between a reflexive and a lexical interpretation, but they are worth noting as they explain the incomplete grammaticalization of this item. If *tanú́-* had undergone complete grammaticalization as a reflexivizer, we could perhaps expect the loss of its declension and/or agreement, which is not the case.

In the autopathic domain, there is a tendency to use middle inflection as a reflexivizer without additional marking when middle forms have a transitive active counterpart within the same stem. Otherwise the additional nominal marking strategy is often used as a disambiguating device.¹² For instance, the present stem of *yaj-* ‘to worship’ can be used both as intransitive (without accusative)

¹²The high number of reflexive examples with an athematic middle participle (especially with the *-āna-* suffix) combined with *tanú́-* is consistent with the idea that these participles are ambiguous between different interpretations, as already pointed out by Kulikov in various papers (e.g. Kulikov 2006).

and indirect causative, as in (16a); and it occurs with *tanú-* to reinforce the reflexive interpretation, as in (16b). In turn, (17) shows that a typically two-place verb form (a Xth causative stem) does not occur with an additional marker:

- (16) a. *yájasva hotar iṣitáh*
 worship.2SG.IMP.MID priest.VOC.SG sent.out.VOC.SG
yájiyān
 worshipper.VOC.SG
 ‘Make (our offering) worshipped when prompted, O priest and worshipper!’ (RV 6.11.1a)
- b. *ágne yájasva tanvám táva svám*
 Agni.VOC worship.2SG.IMP.MID self.ACC.SG you.GEN.SG own.VOC.SG
 ‘Agni, worship yourself / your own body’ (RV 6.11.2d)
- (17) *táva śriyé marútaḥ marjayanta*
 you.GEN.SG splendour.DAT.SG marut.NOM.PL scrub.3PL.CAUS.MID
 ‘For your splendour, the Maruts scrubbed themselves’ (RV 5.3.3a)

Tanú- combined with the adposessive *svá-* can function as a complex compound reflexive, with no difference in meaning from constructions with *tanú-* and without *svá-*. Interestingly, a possessive pronoun or a genitive personal pronoun can also occur within this complex construction, as in (16b) above, but not if *svá-* is missing.

In EV, reflexive *tanú-* plus active-marked verbs are infrequent and restricted to causative stems and the 3PL perfect active form *māmṛjuḥ*, as in (18), which suggests an ongoing diachronic change towards the collapse of the active/middle voice distinction and a decline of middle marking of reflexivity.¹³

- (18) *vásam devásas tanvì ní māmṛjuḥ*
 power.ACC.SG god.NOM.PL self.LOC.SG down/into rub.3PL.PF.ACT
 ‘The gods rubbed their power upon (literally, down to/into) themselves’
 (RV 10.66.9d)

¹³In fact, middle and active voice slowly converge in the history of Sanskrit, and this is in line with a growing use of the masculine noun *ātmán-* ‘self’ as a nominal reflexive marker, regardless of the active/middle verbal endings from the AV (Post Early Vedic) onwards: *yám vayám dviṣmáh sá ātmānam dveṣu* (A). ‘The one who we hate, let that one hate himself’ (AV 16.7.5b); *ātmānam pitāram putrām paútram ... / yé priyās tām úpa hvaye* (MID) ‘To myself, the father, the son, the grandson, those that are dear, I invoke’ (AV 9.5.30ab).

The antecedent of *tanú-* is most usually the subject (in the nominative case). The few examples of non-subject antecedents (marked with a non-nominative case) are ambiguous, as in (19)¹⁴ below, where a meaning ‘body’ is also possible. Here, the antecedent of the indirect reflexive *tanvè* is found in the accusative *ārīḥam vatsám*.

- (19) *ārīḥam vatsám caráthāya mātā*
 unlicked.ACC.SG calf.ACC.SG wander.INF.DAT mother.NOM.SG
svayám gātúm tanvè ichámānam
 by.himself way.ACC.SG body.DAT.SG seek.PTCP.MID.ACC.SG
 ‘The mother (leaving) the calf unlicked for wandering, [him] who is now seeking by himself a way for himself / his body’ (RV 4.18.10cd)

We may include these cases in this survey, as the reflexive interpretation is possible.

The head noun reflexive strategy also expresses indirect reflexivity. In these cases, the subject (in the nominative) and an oblique case (e.g., dative, locative, instrumental) are coreferential, as in (20).

- (20) a. *utá sváyā tanvā sám vade tát*
 and own.INS.SG body.INS.SG with say.1SG.PRS.MID this.ACC.SG
 ‘And I discuss this with myself’ (RV 7.86.2a)
 b. *janáyan mitráṃ tanvè svāyai*
 generate.PTCP.PRS.ACT.NOM.SG friend.ACC.SG body.DAT.SG own.DAT.SG
 ‘Generating a friend for yourself’ (RV 10.8.4d) with antecedent 2SG NOM (*tvám*)

Indirect reflexive constructions with *tanú-* (often with extra emphatic elements, such as *svá-*) are polysemous as regards semantic roles; this is not due to the reflexive nature of *tanú-* but rather due to the functional scope of the dative.

Prototypical indirect reflexives imply coreference with an argument of a three-slot verb in the clause (Kemmer 1993: 77–78). However, many EV verbs are underspecified for valency (even *dā-* ‘to give, take, receive, get, grab’), therefore, there are problems with describing these constructions as prototypical indirect reflexives in a syntactic sense.

¹⁴In this example, *svayám* is an Actor-oriented intensifier. Although it is not a reflexivizer, it is usually found in reflexive constructions. This can be explained by the fact that Actor-oriented intensifiers are frequently found with highly agentive subjects and these are a requirement for autopathic reflexives in Early Vedic.

2.2.3 The polysemy of *tanú-*

Tanú- can also occur as a reciprocal marker and as an intensifier, which corresponds to a frequent kind of polysemy cross-linguistically. Reflexives may be formally identical to both intensifiers and reciprocals (Geniušienė 1987; Kemmer 1993; König & Siemund 2000; König & Gast 2006).

As a recipropathic, the use of *tanú-*, as in (21), is an optional additional marker: it is not frequent in the corpus and in all cases it occurs in interaction with other reciprocal markers (the dual number, the middle voice and, often, the reciprocal adverb *mitháh* ‘mutually’):

- (21) *indrāgnī... mitháh hinvāná tanvā*
 indra.agni.NOM.DU mutually impel.MID.PTCP.NOM.DU body.NOM/ACC.DU
 ‘Indra and Agni, impelling each other mutually’ (RV 10.65.2ab)

As an intensifier, *tanú-* occurs in the nominative (as an adnominal intensifier), or in the instrumental (as an adverbial intensifier), as in (22a–22b), respectively, and it is not restricted to constructions with middle-marked verbs:

- (22) a. *svā tanúḥ bala-déyāya*
 own.NOM.SG body.NOM.SG power-give.GER
mā á ihi
 1SG.ACC towards go.2SG.IMP.ACT
 ‘Come to me to give me power in your own person’ (‘Come to give me strength yourself’) (RV 10.83.5d)
- b. *mandasvā ándhasaḥ*
 rejoice.2SG.IMP.MID juice.GEN.SG
rādhase tanvā mahé
 generosity.DAT.SG body.INS.SG great.DAT.SG
 ‘Rejoice from the (Soma) juice for the great generosity in person’ (RV 3.41.6ab, RV 6.45.27b)

As (22a) shows, *tanú-* can be combined with emphatic elements such as *svā-* also when it is used as an intensifier (see Kulikov 2007b and Orqueda 2019), thus structurally running in parallel with its use as reflexivizer.

2.3 Adjunct auto-possessive constructions

As mentioned, Early Vedic has diverse strategies for the expression of the auto-possessive function: the middle voice (see §2.1.1), the less frequent use of demon-

strative or personal pronouns in the genitive case, as illustrated in (10) above (*tá-va bhāgasya tṛpṇuhi* ‘Sate yourself/become sated from *your* portion!’), RV 2.36.4cd), and the noun phrase integrated by the adjective *svá-* plus a noun for the possessee, as outlined in §2.3.1.

2.3.1 Constructions with *svá-*

The adposessive adjective *svá-*, etymologically connected to Indo-European cognates that can express (reflexive) possession, such as Latin *suus* and Latvian *savs*, is also highly polysemous, both within the clause and in word-formation. Within the area of functions related to reflexivity, it can be used in auto-possessive function within the clause. In (23), for example, it indicates partial coreference with the subject. It can also be used as an intensifier, marking contrastive focus, as in (24). Furthermore, *svá-* can be used as a disjoint possessive marker, as in (25), and as the primary strategy for intensifying/reflexive nominal compounds (see §2.3.2). In none of these cases is it restricted to the combination with middle endings.

- (23) *vádhīm vṛtrám...*
 kill.1SG.A Vṛtra.ACC.SG
svéna bhāmena taviṣáh babhūvān
 own.INS.SG rage.INS.SG strong.NOM.SG become.PTCP.ACT.NOM.SG
 ‘I have killed Vṛtra, having become strong through my own rage’ (RV 1.165.8ab)
- (24) a. *pibatu vṛtrakhādáh sutám sóma*
 drink.3SG.IMP.ACT vṛtra.gnawer.NOM.SG pressed.ACC.SG soma.ACC.SG
dāśúṣaḥ své sadhásthe
 worshipper.GEN.SG own.LOC.SG place.LOC.SG
 ‘Let the Vṛtra-gnawer drink the pressed soma in the worshipper’s own/very seat’ (RV 3.51.9cd)
- b. *sváh svāya dhāyase*
 self.NOM.SG own.DAT.SG nourishing.DAT.SG
kṛnutām ṛtvíg ṛtvíjam
 make.MID.IMP.3SG priest.NOM.SG priest.ACC.SG
 ‘Let the priest himself (and not someone else) make the priest for his own nourishing’ (RV 2.5.7a)

- (25) ...te ápa sá nú vájrāt
 you.GEN.SG away she.NOM.SG just thunderbolt.ABL.SG
 dvitā anamat bhiyāsā svāsya manyóḥ
 just.so bent.3SG.IMP.F.ACT fear.INS.SG OWN.GEN.SG fury.GEN.SG
 ‘Now, she bent away just so from your thunderbolt out of fear of your
 fury’ (RV 6.17.9ab)

As examples (24) through (25) show, the use of *svá-* is not restricted to specific syntactic slots. As for the person feature of its antecedent, 3rd person singular antecedents are in the majority, although the 1st or 2nd person are also frequent, as in (23) and (25), respectively. Regarding the case of the antecedent, it is usually in the nominative subject position (see Vine 1997), but there are examples with an oblique case antecedent in non-subject position, as in (24a). Cases of genitive antecedents seem to be restricted to a few nouns, to 2nd personal pronouns and demonstratives, while there are no 1st person genitive antecedents.¹⁵ Example (26), in turn, shows that the antecedents of *svá-* can be subjects of passive constructions (Grestenberger 2021). This confirms that the antecedents for *svá-* need not be highly agentive.

- (26) mārjālyāḥ mṛjyate své
 fit.for.grooming.NOM.SG groom.3SG.PASS OWN.LOC.SG
 dāmūnāḥ
 house.master.NOM.SG
 kavi-praśtāḥ ātithiḥ śivāḥ naḥ
 poet-praised.NOM.SG guest.NOM.SG kind.NOM.SG OUR.GEN.PL
 ‘Fit to be groomed, he is groomed in his own [house] as master of the
 house, praised by poets, our kind guests’ (RV 5.1.8ab)

2.3.2 Nominal compounds with *svá-*

As the first member of a nominal compound,¹⁶ *svá-* may be added to a deverbal noun or adjective, giving rise to a reflexive (e.g., the first compound in 27a),

¹⁵Hock (1991) claims that cases as in (24a) confirm that genitives controlling reflexives have more agentive-like features. But see also Vine (1997: 212–213), who considers that in these cases the genitive indicates the introduction of a new “rhematic” element that binds the auto-possessive marker.

¹⁶Interestingly, *tanū-* and *svayām* are also first members of nominal compounds in EV. However, the former is only used with its lexical meaning (e.g. *tanū-tyājaḥ* ‘leaving their (own) bodies’), while the latter, with only two occurrences in the RV, has an intensifying/anticausative meaning (e.g. *svayām-jāḥ* ‘self-produced’, RV 7.49.2b), in reference to waters that arise by themselves (springs), in opposition to waters that are found by digging (well water).

auto-possessive, as in (27b), intensifying (e.g., the second compound in 27a), or anticausative interpretation, as in (27c):

- (27) a. *svá-kṣatrāya svāya-śase*
 self-ruling.DAT.SG self-glorious.DAT.SG
 ‘For the self-ruling and the self-glorious’ (RV 5.48.1cb)
- b. *sva-dhāyā mādāyethe*
 self-power.INS.SG rejoice.2DU.CAUS.MID
 ‘You two rejoice with your own power’ (RV 1.108.12b)
- c. *yé sva-jāḥ vavrāsaḥ*
 who.NOM.PL self-generate.NOM.PL hole.NOM.PL
 ‘Who are self-generated, like holes (in the earth)’ (RV 1.168.2a)

Notably, unambiguous reflexive examples are rare and usually can also be interpreted as intensifiers. This confirms the formal overlap between reflexives and intensifiers, which is cross-linguistically frequent in word formation (compounding or derivation; König 2011).¹⁷

3 Final remarks

We can draw the following conclusions regarding reflexive constructions in Early Vedic. First, we showed that polysemy is widespread for the different strategies linked to reflexivity. Secondly, we showed that, while the middle voice is used for both autopathic reflexives and auto-possessives, the use of differential markings for autopathic and auto-possessive constructions arises already in Early Vedic. Thirdly, non-nominative subjects controlling autopathic reflexives are not an ordinary case, although they are attested, as long as they are agent-like NPs. This

¹⁷The complex polysemic nature of *svá-* may be explained in terms of its diachrony from PIE. Contrary to the common opinion that it develops from an original reflexive root in Proto-Indo-European, we believe that a possessive marker was eventually formed on the base of an original deictic marker (a proximate demonstrative stem) that was high in the features of topicality and animacy. This would explain, particularly, the uses with a genitive antecedent and the disjoint possessive. A brief list of facts that support this interpretation is: first, that in practically all cases *svá-* has an animate referent (which is not usually a requisite for disjoint possessives); secondly, that *svá-* frequently occurs in prominent slots in the stanza, mostly the initial position of the clause, in Early Vedic but not in later varieties (by contrast, reflexive markers and possessives need not to be linked to prominent clause slots); thirdly, that intensification occurs in a high number of cases of nominal compounds, while this is not the case of reflexive compounds (see especially Orqueda 2017 for an extensive overview of this claim).

suggests that antecedents of reflexivizers are mainly selected according to semantic features rather than syntactic functions.

Lastly, we proposed some diachronic explanations for the strategies under study. In particular, we have shown the emergent use of nominal marking for reflexives in the autopathic and in the oblique domains, which is in line with the eventual loss of voice distinctions in later stages of the language. Reflexives have progressively come to require that the antecedent is an NP high in the features of volition and control, thus distinguishing reflexives from other related functions (such as anticausatives or statives). From our perspective, this development is consistent with changes from a more semantically determined proto-language towards a more configurational syntax. Further research on these topics in later descendants would undoubtedly contribute to a better understanding of these diachronic developments.

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Abbreviations

This chapter follows the Leipzig Glossing Rules (Comrie et al. 2008). Additional abbreviations used are:

ACT	active voice	MID	middle voice
AOR	aorist	PF	perfect
GER	gerund	SUBJ	subjunctive
IMPF	imperfect		

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