

## On the decrease of lability and increase of transitive verbs in Vedic

(anonymized)

In the Early Vedic language of the Ṛgveda we can find two different systems of voice and transitivity oppositions standing side by side within a single verbal paradigm (<sup>1</sup>*r* ‘to rise, raise’). On the one hand, active and middle forms of the present stem of the reduplicated III<sup>rd</sup> present class clearly exhibit LABILE behavior and are thus used both in transitive and intransitive constructions, encoding both causation by a causer (i.e. the subject) or lack of causation within the event, as in (1) and (2):

- (1) *īy-ar-ti*  
REDUPL(III<sup>RD</sup>.CLASS.PRESENT.STEM)-rise/raise-3SG.PRES.IND.ACTIVE  
‘is rising’ (intr.) or ‘is raising sth. or so.’ (trans.)
- (2) *īr-te*  
REDUPL(III<sup>RD</sup>.CLASS.PRESENT.STEM):rise/raise-3SG.PRES.IND.MIDDLE  
‘is rising, arising’ (intr.) or ‘is raising sth. or so.’ (trans.) or ‘was raised’ (passive)

On the other hand, active forms of the corresponding stem of the thematic X<sup>th</sup> present class only occur in transitive constructions encoding causation of the subject, whereas corresponding middle forms show labile behavior again, as in (3) and (4):

- (3) *īr-āya-ti*  
rise/raise-“X<sup>TH</sup>.CLASS.PRESENT.STEM”-3SG.PRES.IND.ACTIVE  
‘is raising sth. or so.’ (trans.)
- (4) *īr-āya-te*  
rise/raise-“X<sup>TH</sup>.CLASS.PRESENT.STEM”-3SG.PRES.IND.MIDDLE  
‘is rising’ (intr.) or ‘is raising sth. or so.’ (trans.) (can be autobenefactive etc.)

Whereas the difference between active and middle forms of the reduplicated present stem seems to be triggered by agency features (i.e. the subject of active forms is more likely to be agent and cannot be patient), the distinction of active and middle forms of (3) vs. (4) is triggered by transitivity and causation, and has little to do with agency features.

In his discussion of the difference, Pooth (2012) suggests that the emergence of Vedic transitive active forms, as given in (3), is innovative and secondary when compared with the active form given in (1). Accordingly, the original voice distinction was mainly driven by agency (i.e., volition, control, responsibility and animacy), whereas the secondary voice opposition was driven by transitivity distinctions (including autobenefactive middle meaning and other such meanings of the middle domain).

In our talk, we want to present a parallel verb that exhibits the two different behaviors to further discuss these developments, which are part of the general decline of lability and the increase of verb forms specified for transitive vs. intransitive behavior within Vedic (cf. Kulikov 2014).

## References

- Kulikov, Leonid I. (2014): The decline of labile syntax in Old Indo-Aryan: A diachronic typological perspective. *Linguistics* 52(4), 1139-1165.
- Pooth, Roland A. (2012): Zum Aufkommen transitiver Verben im frühen Vedischen am Beispiel <sup>1</sup>*r*. *The Indo-European Verb*. Ed. Craig H. Melchert. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 267-84.